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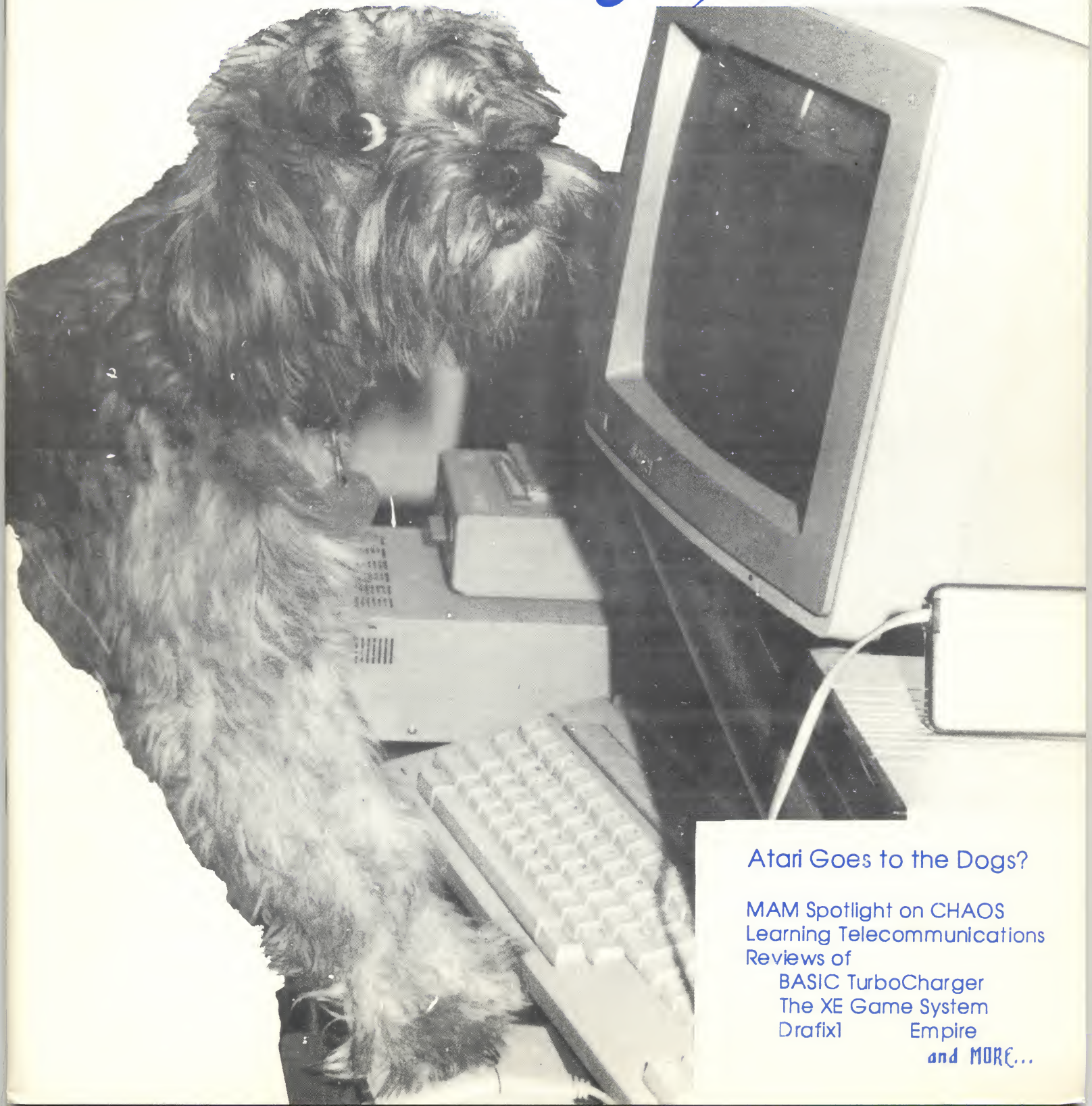
Michigan Atari Magazine

Your Atari Interface

Vol. 3 No. 3
March 1988



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Letters to the Editor

Hello MAM,

I just received, on February 5th, the Feb. issue of your magazine. Good work! I'm glad to see it coming at the beginning of the month. You asked for input on the magazine, so here's my 2-cents.

The Cover

I would prefer a full-color photo or artwork on the cover. If MAM is to be sitting in computer stores next to magazines like Antic and such, then I feel it needs a cover that attracts attention. I like the font you've chosen for the name, but there's too much space between letters. It looks like a 15cpi font being printed at 10cpi. While I'm at it, I'd like the title on the cover about 20% larger.

Inside I like it! Keep your feature articles and club news separate. I hate fishing for the end of an article. I'm also very lazy and usually don't bother looking for it if it's not on the next page. I read the club news section too. Just because it's in back and I don't belong to all those groups doesn't make their news uninteresting.

I'd like to see a removable page put into MAM with the following:

Side A: A calendar showing the meeting dates and times of participating user groups. Once in a while I find I can visit a user group, but I can't find who meets when. Having a calendar would be a great constant reminder.

Side B: A list of BBS numbers for the participating groups. I get too interested in the articles to put down MAM and find a pen and paper to write phone numbers. When I'm at the computer I'm to lazy to hunt down my copy of MAM to look up BBS numbers.

Oh No! There's More

The possible dissolve of BCAUG upset me. I belong to an old car club in the midst of dissolving. I've told the officers of the car club my observations on why the club "didn't work." I'll list them here because they can be used as warning signs of a "doomed" club.

First, the club becomes a closed social group. Usually this consists of the officers and oldest members (not age, but time in the club). At meetings, very little club business gets discussed. Going to a club meeting is like being in a stranger's house watching them celebrate Christmas. As more and more people feel left out, they stop attending meetings. Meanwhile, the social group is having so much fun they are blind to the problem, dismissing the newly lost club members as deadbeats.

Second, the club fails to make novices and "non-owners" feel welcome. In the case of the car club I belong to, the club's policy was to welcome anyone to the group whether or not the potential member owned an old car or not, but the way the club conducted meetings and events made novices and "non-owners" feel left out. Any computer club should greet all potential members with open arms. Meetings and events should be planned in a way to make these people feel welcome. The game nights are great for making new members feel at home. An informal chat (phone call or letter) from an officer or long-time club member might be in order. Find how these people feel about the club and what they are hoping to learn. How many novices are going to stand up at a meeting when an ST is sitting open with someone describing this chip and that gizmo, and ask, "What's a mouse?"

Third, the members with the most talent, brains, or time to devote to the club are given preferred treatment by the club. Talent, brains, and time are nice traits for officers, but don't expect all club members to be this elite.

To keep people humble, remember Groucho Marx's quote, "I would never be a member of a club that would accept me as a member." One last comment. I'm a member of WAUG! and they've done a good job of avoiding these problems.

Comments on John Nagy's Software Article

I agree with Mr. Nagy. Something needs to be done to reward 8bit programmers for their shareware works. The big question is how to do this. When I had nothing more than an 800XL and a good old 1030 modem, I felt after I paid the connect time to download a program (at the lightning speed of 300 baud) or pay the long distance fee for accessing a board, I couldn't afford to pay anymore on that piece of software. (With some of the programs I've downloaded, I felt the programmer should pay for my wasted connect time. Back to the main point.) What if the clubs paid the programmer a small amount when the program was put into the club library? Then, whenever the club sold a copy of the program to a member, the club would send a token amount of the sale to the author. I know this raises many questions. How much to give? What about all the programs already in the club library? Does a small utility warrant the same pay scale as a full-blown word processor?

I don't have answers to these questions, but think of the possibilities if these hard working programmers get some reward for their effort. It would put the club in direct contact with the programmer. The programmer would be more likely to write programs. He would also be more likely to provide updates, debug or modify his works for the club. He may even let the group alpha or beta test

future programs. It looks like I've spent enough time on my soap box.

Always Atari,
Jay Skotcher

Attention Atari ST Owners!

The time has come to unite! We need to let certain programmers know that we want to buy their programs. Write them! Convince them to do ST conversions. Show your support!

Below are several companies and their games that I would like to see converted. I have contacted all three of them, and each has said either they didn't know when they would do a conversion or that they were not going to do one. If you are interested in any of the following games, please join in and write them.

3-d Helicopter Simulator, Thexder [Sierra On-Line, PO Box 485, Coarsegold CA, 94039]

Fire Power, Turbo, Galatic Invasion, Land of Legends, Faery Tale Adventures [Microillusions, 17408 Chatsworth, Granda Hills, CA, 91344]

Chuck Yeager's Flight Simulator, Ferrari Formula One [EA, 2755 Campus Drive, San Mateo CA, 94403].

If there are other titles that you want to see converted and would like a general call for support, like this one, please feel free to write me.

Anthony Robinson
PO Box 18093
Lansing, MI 48901

Atari News and Comment

News Analysis by John Nagy

Here's more Atari news and rumors gleaned from press releases, club newsletters, backroom chatter, and personal interviews with the people who should know... .

With an "official" product lineup including two Game consoles, three different 8bit computers, 68000 series computers in half-, one-, two- and four-meg sizes, 8086 PC and XT clones, an AT clone, a 386 clone, and the 32-bit Transputer, Atari has perhaps the widest line of consumer computers in the world! Now if we are ever offered a chance to buy them, who knows what might happen to this amazing company?

Hottest news in some time -- OSS and ICD tie the knot! Optimised Systems Software, famous for designing Atari BASIC, then BASIC XL, BASIC XE, DOS, DOS XL, Action!, and more... is now selling their Atari line through ICD Inc.... makers of SpartaDOS, the US Doubler, the P:R: Connection, the Multi-Input/Output box, and more! It appears to be a buy-out, and word has it that Bill Wilkinson, long OSS leader and Atari guru extraordinaire has bailed out entirely. ICD will also distribute the formerly unavailable and very powerful MAC65 assembler and accessories as well! For MAC65, Action!, Writer's Tool, BASIC XL+XE, DOS XL, and even Personal Pascal for the Atari ST, contact OSS/ ICD at 815-968-2228, or call their BBS at 815-968-2229.

Other shakeups at ICD include the loss of Keith Ledbetter (of Express! terminal program fame). It is said Keith went back to his old job in Virginia after direction frustrations at ICD and a decision by ICD to end development plans for Express! Pro BBS systems. He is apparently going to "go it alone" and continue Express! development and sales privately. We wish the best of luck to Keith, who helped lead Atari telecommunications into the 20th century.

I have no word yet as to how this affects the release date of the (still) unavailable, but Atari-funded, Express!212 for use on the new modem and an 8bit computer without an expensive interface. However, several flavors of revised Amodem terminal programs are available, and now a handler, devised and circulated in the public domain by the Seattle-Puget Sound Atari Computer Enthusiasts (SPACE) club, will actually allow Express! 850 to be used with the SX212. Check your area BBS or club library. If you can find one, the SX212 is just about the best modem deal available for *any* computer user, and especially for 8bit users who haven't invested in an interface. Plus, since the modem will also plug into any "normal" IBM or ST computer,

you won't lose your investment if you change computers. It's well under $100 by mail or on dealer shelves (where?).

The word from Darek Mihocka is that a *new* version of his ST-Transformer will be out this spring... and it will be 50-75% *faster* than the "old slow" one. You read a lot about the 8bit Atari emulation program here in MAM last year, and the publicity helped urge Atari to allow the use of their copyrighted operating system and BASIC code for use in the public domain emulator. This time the Transformer will include player missile graphics (Darek expects!) and might include an R: handler for modem use. Darek tells me he has pared the formerly 88 clock-cycles overhead per instruction lookup (done every time an opcode is acted on!) down to 32 cycles, and has optimized other parts of the code as well. This increase will likely not bring it up to "full 8bit speed" in many programs, but it will be close in many.

The *biggest* difference of all will be that the new ST-Transformer will offer the option at runtime to choose Atari 8bit Emulation, Apple][Emulation, or Commodore 64 Emulation!!! The "original emulation demo" program that Derek circulated almost two years ago included some Apple emulation, but this time it should be quite complete.

So then, jokingly, I asked Darek about support for 1050 drives on the ST to allow use of 8bit commercial software... and he tells me about some developmental support from 8bit programmer Alan Reeve (author of *ReeveKey, News Station,* etc.) of Chicago. Alan has contributed a program that allows Atari 8bit disks -- even boot disks -- to be read *directly* by an ST for use in the emulator when used with a 5.25" drive such as those for *pc:ditto*. The ST continues its reputation as the computer that can be *anything*. The list of emulation now includes Atari 8, Commodore 64, Apple][, Macintosh, CP/M, IBM, UNIX, um...and more, I think. Oh yea, it can run ST software too...

DTACK Grounded, a company that used an unusual distribution method for its first and only product, DBASIC, has folded. DTACK gave out free copies of the BASIC itself, along with a few copies of the manual to user groups for review. The idea was that once you got the BASIC for free, you would be happy to buy the big manual from DTACK... Well, it didn't work. One account says that DTACK sold only 60 copies of the manual before calling it quits. No additional support or updates will be released, although many reviewers were impressed with many aspects of the BASIC. You might still pick up a copy from your user group.

Atari Goes to the Dogs?

News Analysis by Bill & Pattie Rayl
(Quotes in this article originally appeared on the Atari16 sig of CompuServe.)

Neil Harris, ex-director of Marketing and Communications and current East and Midwest Director of Sales and Marketing for Atari Corp., once said something to the effect that it is fashionable for Atari owners to hate Atari Corporation.

This "trend" is no more apparent than on the major information networks like CompuServe and in the various Atari user groups across the country. Dissatisfaction with support coming from Atari is being expressed by users/owners, software developers and dealers. This dissatisfaction is quickly growing into what could spell the doom of Atari in the US.

The Users

Many Atari owners have felt a growing sense of abandonment and disregard from a company they care deeply about. Being an Atari owner has, almost from Day One, meant facing scorn and even ridicule from the rest of the computer community. The 8bit Atari owners basically took this in stride, secure in the knowledge that they had the best personal computer on the market. And, even if the industry in general wasn't supportive, the old Warner Atari at least seemed to care about the people buying its products. Then, the sky fell in. The old Atari, due to what can only be called gross mismanagement, ran itself out of business. Eight-bit owners have felt orphaned ever since.

The new Atari was far too busy getting its feet on the ground and launching its new computer to fully support the old machines. Combine this with the fact that the old Atari practically killed the 8bit dealer network and you get a lot of people with nowhere to go for assistance. First came dismay and bewilderment, then anger and finally resignation.

Does this scenario sound familiar to you ST owners out there? The signs seem to be pointing to "history" repeating itself with the ST line -- Atari seems to be moving in a new direction with its Transputer, and the "dealer network" is still non-existant in the US.

Betsy Garfield of Chicago, Ill., says, "There are almost no stores in the Chicago metro area where the ST is available. People in California seem to have great quantities of machines and software...everywhere else in the country, tough luck."

Closer to home, the Battle Creek Atari Users' Group cited Atari's harsh mail-order policies as a contributor to its recent difficulties. In places

where noone sells Ataris, prospective buyers are often forced to mail order equipment. Atari has taken a hard line on mail order of the STs, leaving people like members of BCAUG with no easy access to new hardware.

The Dealers

So, why hasn't Atari been able to establish a strong dealer network in the US? Why is it that computer stores local to groups such as BCAUG refuse to carry the Atari line, even after being approached, entreated and even begged to do so by loyal Atarians? The answer is simple -- Atari has not created an environment attractive enough for dealers to "take a chance" on a company that still has a game machine manufacturer image.

Atari has taken on the attitude that its dealers should and will meet certain criteria (full service department, traveling sales/service personnel, etc.), purchase equipment in quantity and/or in "sets" (if you want to sell Megas, you have to pay for a $3,000 "parts kit") and various other "marketing strategies" designed to weed out the faint of heart.

If, by luck, chance or sheer determination, dealers makes it through "boot camp," they are given a place on the front lines of Atari's war. Unfortunately, once dealers are in the trenches, they are left to fight an undirected guerilla war.

"My local distributor and a foreign distributor both tell me they can't get products from Atari," said Dave Groves, a SysOp of CompuServe. It seems Atari has attempted to recruit already trained troops, armed them with a few arrows and daggers and thrust them into a technological war with no supply lines to help the soldiers keep up the fight.

Tom Mitchell, who works for one of the largest and oldest Atari dealers in the US, summed it up well when he said, "With no national marketing support from Atari for the ST...us sales soldiers are very tired." Moral can often be a determining factor in any war, and Atari dealer moral is in a decline which makes the recent stock market drops look like minor fluctuations.

The Developers

Some of the most serious and pointed criticism directed at Atari Corporation is coming from the third-party software and hardware manufacturers. Many programmers complained about the original documentation that came with the developer's package. Much of the docs had nothing at all to do with the ST, and the entire package was disorganized. Atari has produced new documentation, but it took over a year, and some developers are now saying they are having trouble getting the developer's package from Atari.

Another complaint deals with the "bugs" in the TOS operating system. "There have been too many excuses from Atari as to why this or that product is delayed, blitters are not available or TOS is not fixed," said *Flash!* programmer Alan Page. "Is it a smart business decision for Atari to leave the 40 folder bug, GDOS problems and other glitches unsolved for such a long time?"

Alan and others believe that Atari simply lacks the personnel to accomplish its goals -- supply both the European and US markets, produce the XE Game machine, ST and Mega lines as well as promote the Abaq Transputer. Atari has done wonders with its "minimal staff" philosophy, "lean and mean" as Atari likes to call it. Now, the company has come to a point where it cannot possibly continue on this course without turning its back on some projects. As Alan Page put it, " 'Lean and mean' turns out to be 'starving and anemic'."

Enough Doom and Gloom

Is there no light at the end of all this; no glimmer of hope? Is the ST destined to follow its 8bit brother as we watch history repeat itself? We don't think so. Atari is more than financially sound, and even now the company is working to increase production with a plant in the US. As Neil Harris put it, "In this business, things can turn around in a hurry. Not overnight, like the voices of discontent have been demanding. We [Atari] need to get production cranked up (in process in a big way), and get the marketing programs in line (ditto) -- but when all is ready, we'll see some action."

The majority of developers also have faith in Atari and the computers they produce. "It's true that software sales on the ST due to marketing policies by Atari and piracy have not been what I expected or hoped for," said Gordon Monnier, president of Michtron, "but we are not and have no plans to leave the Atari software market."

With the recent release or packages like Word Perfect, Microsoft Write, Drafix1, etc., the ST line is actually stronger and more viable than ever before. The only thing missing is that the outside world has yet to recognize the power, ease of use and value of the Atari machines. Many people in the computing world have never even heard of the ST, a sad thing to say for a 68000-based powerhouse that has been on the market for over two years!

We believe Atari is waking up to the fact that it is no longer good enough to produce a great piece of hardware and offer it at a reasonable price. The current computer purchaser wants -- no, demands -- more than that. Without excellent end-user, developer, and dealer support, even the most impressive hardware package will quickly fade into oblivion.

What can we all do?

The time has come for us all to lay down our arms and forget about fighting a war that has no winner. As users, we must break out of the dismay-anger-resignation syndrome. It is essential that we let our voice be heard in Ataridom, but at the same time we must not let our voice degenerate into disorganized shouting matches and name-calling. It is often far too easy to become carried away when one feels strongly about something. If criticism is directed to Atari in a professional, constructive manner, perhaps more people will listen.

As individuals and user group members, we can surely do more to promote our interests than we have in the past. Instead of looking for Atari to pave our streets with new and exciting hardware and software, we should be "lobbying" to get developers to produce what we want and to get retailers to sell those products.

If Atari and the user groups across this nation would work toward the common goal of gaining the respect and acceptance of the machines we all care so deeply about, then truly nothing could prevent what we have all hoped for from becoming reality.

[Please write or call (our phone and address is on the back cover) or leave us mail on CompuServe -- 71361,411 -- for furthur discussion and comment.]

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MAM Spotlight on CHAOS

Prepared by Leo Sell

From out of the void...CHAOS!! I know that's not how the story usually goes, but it is apt. CHAOS, like many user groups, came into existence to fill a void. CHAOS is the Capitol Hill Atari Owner's Society. Supporting all Atari computers, 8bit and 16bit alike, we are one of the largest Atari user groups in Michigan. Our membership numbers over 150, and is drawn from all over Michigan as well as out of state and Canada. We are most proud of our public domain disk libraries. Recent trading and revisions have made it one of the best sources of quality programs anywhere. Mail orders are cheerfully accepted. Write for a catalog (over 40 pages, $2.00).

A recent innovation is our library rental program. Any club or individual can rent all or part of our disk library, copying what they please onto their own media, and saving a good deal of money in the process. The prices, at this time are $65.00 for the 8bit library, $85.00 for the 16bit library, and $120 for both, plus deposit. Please note, however, that the prices are under study at this time and may be changed by the time this is published.

Our publications library has books for the beginner to the expert, back issues of Atari-related magazines, and exchange newsletters from nearly 100 other clubs. Our CHAOS BBS (517-371-1106) is known for its quality, dependability and ease of use, as well as being a great source for information. Often innovative and online for over 5 years now, the CHAOS BBS is now offering 2400 baud, online games, and more. Very early on, CHAOS made a strong commitment to the ST and its owners. As a result of that commitment, our ST INterest Group continues to grow in numbers and support.

CHAOS, through the hard work of several members, was the originator of Michigan Atari Magazine. Today, we participate in the magazine, offering yearly subscriptions as part of our membership benefits. This is just a partial list, giving the highlights. It doesn't include such things as the camaraderie, assistance and so forth that is a part of every group.

History

CHAOS (under a different name) began as a small group of hackers, hobbyists, and computer professionals, with a common interest in the Atari 800. As time passed, our membership grew, adding Atari 400 owners, cassette owners and more. With growth came the need for structure and organization. The name was changed to CHAOS, a constitution was written and we incorporated. A

number of the founders were management and computer specialists. Apparently they saw (correctly) the need for a strong structure and organization. Our constitution was revised in 1985, but the philosophy and style of organization the club's founders put into place has been retained. The result has been a consistency and dependability that is too little found these days. CHAOS has become one of the single best sources of information and support in any computer community. We have grown and matured. Our bywords are consistency, organization, dependability and value.

Organization

I truly believe that the structure and organization we have has made us successful. As I mentioned, CHAOS is a corporation and is organized in much the same way as a business. Our Board of Directors consists of five elected officers, including the President, Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer, and two at-large members -- one for each of the major groups of owners (8bit and 16bit). In addition to the officers, each main function of the club is headed by an appointed manager or leader. The larger jobs, such as the disk library, are further divided using assistants whose work is overseen by the manager. Further use of the appointees' ideas and abilities is made by a management type of committee, called the Activities Board. It consists of the Vice President as chair and all appointees of the club. Together they oversee their various activities and responsibilities and brainstorm for new ideas and services.

Another of our recent accomplishments of which we take pride, is the way we have weathered the ST crisis. It seems many clubs split the ST owners completely off, for a variety of reasons. That didn't happen here, although for a time there was some controversy and sentiment for a new and separate ST group. In the very early days of the ST, the CHAOS Board of Directors deemed that we would support the ST as fully as possible. We strongly urged ST owners to remain with the club and take advantage of the structure and resources that already existed. We emphasized the common ground and needs of both 8bit and 16bit owners. We committed strongly to the ST owners and then stuck to our resolution. We have also made it plain that we believe the future lies with the ST. As a result, our ST presence continues to grow and prosper, as does the club itself.

The Future

What does the future hold for CHAOS? I believe we will continue to prosper and support owners of new and old Atari computers alike. As a percentage of membership, ST owners and Atari generations yet to come will continue to increase and that of the 8bit will decrease. But the foundations laid by the 8bit owners will serve the future members well. And, because we have joined together for support now, we can look forward to mutual support, cooperation, and harmony for a long time to come. You can write CHAOS at: CHAOS, PO Box 16132, Lansing, MI 48901.

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Learning Telecommunications... Bit by Bit

By Jerry Cross

Picture this for a minute... The time is the near distant future. You just got home from your job at the office. You are one of the unfortunate people who still must commute, since most other office workers do their work from the comfort of their home over their computers. After taking off your coat, you stop at your own computer terminal and check your mail. Let's see...bills...a letter from your brother (he's vacationing in Florida), and he sent along a digitized picture of him on the beach... more bills...junk mail (yes, just like they did in the past)...more bills (WOW, look at that phone bill!)...

You proceed to punch up your bank account code and your bank statement appears on the screen. A few quick keystrokes and you instruct the bank to transfer funds to pay off your bills the next day. While you are at it, you take your money card out of your pocket and insert it into the slot on the computer interface. You instruct the bank to withdraw money from your account, which is then encoded onto a magnetic strip located on your card. You can later give this card to a merchant, who will then deduct money from your card using the same method. You can still remember stories your grandfather told you about how people carried around little pieces of paper to pay for things!

You smell something in the kitchen and go to investigate. "What's that smell?" you ask your wife.

"I got a recipe for synthetic meatloaf from the Good Housekeeping database and was trying it out" she says.

You dash off to the kitchen terminal and rapidly key in your inquiry. Yup, the delivery boy dropped off the Alka-Seltzer you ordered this morning. Whew!

You search the house for the kids. Junior is up in his room playing wargames with dozens of other kids from around the country over the games telenetwork. Your oldest daughter is in the study downloading her latest college lessons. She is going to a local community college, but is earning extra credits by communicating with a college on the other side of the country.

While you wait for dinner to finish you go to the living room to read the news. You sit on the sofa and turn on the television set. You are rewarded with a perfectly clear, static free digitized picture of another Gilligan's Island rerun. Not again! You pick up the remote control and punch in your objections to the show. The information is sent to the television station and recorded on their computer survey database. Your comments, along with hundreds of others, are recorded and sent to the program director, who will then cancel the show and replace it with Green Acres next week. Oh well...

A few more keystrokes and you are now looking at the latest news from the ViewText News Network. Newspapers are a thing of the past now, since by the time you received it, the news was hours old. By following the onscreen menus you are led to the latest sports scores, editorials, and world news.

Hmmm...this all sounds like something from the Jetsons cartoons, right? This won't happen for another 50 years you say? Would you believe all this will be a reality by the end of the 1990's? Everything you read is already being tested, or is being currently used, someplace in the country.

Yup, it's true. Barring government red tape, the usual lawsuits by small companies crying "anti-trust," and assorted anti-big brother interest groups, everything you read will be a standard feature in every household! This will all be done using a new technology called Integrated Services Digital Networking (ISDN). In concept, each house will be connected into a service center, which is also connected into a huge variety of computer databases and communication services. This can include such services as alarm circuits, databases, packet networks, vidtex services, and lots more.

ISDN will allow the phone company to offer each customer one voice line, plus two data lines, one being capable of carrying high speed data transmissions. ISDN will allow you to have a low speed interactive data line (9.6Kbits per second), or intermediate speed bulk data line (1.5 Megabits per second), and even high speed full motion video data lines, capable of handling 45 megabits per second!

The beauty of this system is it uses existing phone cables, so there is no need to rebuild existing telecommunications plants. The user will be able to send and receive virtually any type of message, including voice, data, graphics, telemetry, and any type of information that can be encoded and packaged in a standardized digital form. This technology is currently being tested in certain cities around the world. Because it is still in the testing stages, it is being offered only to certain businesses that require large numbers of high speed data lines. But, as the technology improves, and as soon as enough equipment can be manufactured, you can expect to see it offered on a standard basis.

According to the information I received from Ameritech, the cost of this system (when it is installed on a large basis) should be about 2-3 times what you are paying for a single voice line service. But when you stop to look at what you are getting (a high speed data line plus standard data line and

voice line), it is truly a bargain!

But all this is still in the future. The average home computer user must be satisfied with slow speed telecommunications, and the current assortment of information services being offered. What I hope to accomplish in this and future articles is to get you acquainted with telecommuncations, how it works, and what it has to offer you. Next month we will start by looking at the equipment you will need to get started. Future articles will cover online services, running your own phonelines, and communication software reviews.

I have about 5 years of experience with modems, and have run a BBS for 4 years (on both 8bits and STs). There is still a lot of things I don't know. I am still learning new things every day and will pass them along to you too. If you have any questions you would like answered, or a topic you wish covered, drop me a line.

But many of you are probably thinking to yourself, "I will never get into telecommunications." Well, you remember the last time you used an Automatic Teller to withdraw money, or how about when you used that card to punch in at work? Information was sent over phone lines to a computer which responded by storing data and causing a reaction (dispensing money or writing a check). You say you won't ever get into it? Well.... gotcha!

BASIC TurboCharger from ALPHA Systems

8bit Software Review by Bob Retelle

This is the kind of book I wish I'd had when I was learning to program my venerable old Atari 400, and later, my 800. In those days, much of what we learned was the result of trial and error, guided by the articles which occasionally appeared in computer magazines.

BASIC Turbocharger is a 128-page book, which comes with a double-sided disk containing 167 Machine Language subroutines in the form of BASIC subroutines. These subroutines can be merged with your own BASIC programs, to give you the speed and power of Machine Language, without forcing you to learn the actual 6502 Machine Code.

The subroutines cover a wide range of subjects, from creating different graphic modes on the screen, to Disk I/O, reading the joystick ports, sorting arrays, and a lot more.

There are a number of subroutines dealing with loading and saving different formats of picture files, including one which will save a screen in compressed Koalapad format, something else I wish I'd had long ago!

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The book presents a very nice explanation of player missile graphics, along with an array of subroutines to set up PM graphics and move them in all directions smoothly at machine language speed.

Most of the subroutines have an example of a BASIC program which will show you how to use the subroutine, and its results, making it easy to learn how to get the most out of them.

Here's a listing of the chapters in the book, to give you an idea of the subjects covered:

A Little Bit about BASIC
Moving Memory
Fun with Text
Fun with Memory
Numeric Arrays
Graphics & Antic Modes
Disk I/O
Loader/Saver Routines
Loading and Saving Picture Screens
KoalaPad and Atari Touch Tablet
Fun with Pictures
Display List Interrupt Routines
Joystick Routines
Player/Missile Graphics
Player/Missiles in Vertical Blank Interrupt
Miscellaneous
Number System Conversions
Bit Flipping, Reading, Clearing and Setting
Text on a Graphics 8 Screen

BASIC Turbocharger does *not* attempt to teach you anything about Machine Language itself. What it does instead is to give you 167 new tools to use in creating better BASIC programs.

If you'd like to speed up your BASIC programs, make them more powerful, and get them to do things that just can't be done with BASIC alone, then this $24.95 disk and book from ALPHA Systems may be just what you've been looking for.

[Special Thanks to Alpha Systems for the review copy of BASIC TurboCharger, which Alpha has also generously donated to WAUG!]

Drafting with DRAFIX1

ST Software Review by B. Johnson (GLASS)

DRAFIX1 (V 1.0) by Foresight Resources is, at the time of this writing, the most advanced drafting package available for the Atari ST. It comes on two single-sided disks (not copy-protected) with complete documentation; an installation and setup guide (84 pages); a "getting started" book with tutorials (252 pages); and a technical reference manual (206 pages). It's a lot of reading, but quite necessary if you are to become proficient at computer aided design (CAD). This package retails for $200.00 list but you may be able to find it for as low as $160.00 locally.

I use Autocad on the IBM AT computer at work, and use First Cadd by Generic at home on the ST. I'm also somewhat familiar with GFA Draft by Michtron and EasyDraw. I've found Drafix to be the most complete drafting package available for the ST at the present time, with a few reservations. Drafix supports eight Hewlett Packard, nine Houston Instrument, three Roland, one Nicolet/Brunsing, two Enter Computer Sweet-P, one Numonics, two Ioline, and one Tandy plotter.

Yet, it doesn't have a single dot matrix printer driver in this first version for the ST. A dot plotter program is available for the IBM version of Drafix (V 2.0) and might be available for the ST in the future. There is a screen dump, but the resolution is disappointing.

This CAD package will run in high (monochrome) and medium (color) resolutions. You can use up to eight line types, 12 font styles, 256 layers and all the other features you'd expect from such a complete drafting package. This allows the user to put together complete sets of drawings: i.e. house floorplans (layer 0 for the main floor, layer 1 for electrical layout, layer 2 for plumbing layout, layer 3 for heating, ventilation and air conditioning layout), printed circuit diagrams, wiring diagrams, etc.

One of the features I really like is the ability to save a drawing in Degas format as a slide. If you have Degas or Degas Elite, you can convert this slide into any resolution, add color and even create your own slide show.

Drafix doesn't use GEM much -- only for loading and saving files. The screen consists of three levels of pull-down menus that run horizontally across the top with ten items in the top level. Each one can lead to nine items in the second level, and each one of those can lead to eight items in the third level. It sounds complicated but it isn't, and you can always see how you arrived at the present command, since all three levels of menus are visible at one time.

On the left side of the screen are approximately 20 commands always visible and available for selecting and changing drawing parameters at will. At the bottom of the screen is a status line with X and Y coordinates, with available ram and the time always visible. Because so much information is displayed at one time, I highly recommend the monochrome monitor for this package.

The "Getting Started" manual contains 19 tutorials on different aspects of computer drawing. This is an excellent way to learn the software with as little pain as possible. These tutorials will teach you how to draw lines parallel or perpendicular to

each other, draw circles or arcs, draw various shapes such as hexagons, ellipses, rectangles and so on, adding text to a drawing, dimensioning an object and finally plotting a drawing. It also discusses how to save an object to disk as a symbol and later recall that object to use in any drawing. The symbol library you create will save many hours of drawing the same object over and over. This is where you'll really begin to generate drawings faster and more accurately.

As for text, you can use any one of 12 font styles, any size text and write at any angle. The text editing package has been omitted from this version of Drafix. It will probably show up as a future release like the dot matrix printer drivers. I've noticed many companies offer a good software package but leave out something essential and then develop one more software packages to fill the gap. Even so, $160.00 for Drafix and (possibly) $40.00 for the dot matrix drivers is still a bargain for the complete package. Autocad for the IBM would run you well over $2100.00! I don't think I'll complain too much.

Drafix1 is the most complete drawing package available for the ST -- and reasonably priced. If you're serious about CAD, then Drafix1 deserves your consideration.

Hands on the Atari XE Game System:

An In-Depth look

Copyright 1988 by Terry Conklin Club Network (517) 372-3131/ (313) 334-8877

[The following review is an in-depth look at the Atari XE Game System. I had the opportunity to really give it the once over, and did so because of the limited review given in Antic. This is expressly created for distribution in original form, as long as the copyright remains intact, whether by BBS or CompuServe or your local newsletter.]

Atari's first new 8bit computer in some time has hit the streets, and preliminary magazine reviews have been pretty scanty, so when a shiny new machine came in, I gave it the works.

First Impressions

The XE Game System is built well. At least as well as the 130XE and perhaps a bit better. The base unit is solid and the separate, detachable keyboard is nicely weighted. The POWER switch, perhaps one of the most-used switches on any game machine, isn't the greatest and could have been better made. On the other hand, the big pastel-colored START/SELECT/OPTION/RESET buttons were fine. The detached keyboard is a new entity to Atari 8bits, and I really like it. It isn't super-light, and is well-sized and shaped for setting in one's lap for programming. I say programming because many long-time Atari owners are giving the XE Game System a serious look as a second machine, largely because of the keyboard. However, the console keys are on the main unit, not the detached keyboard, so some of it's usefulness as a "lean back and relax" work device is inhibited.

The HELP key is on the keyboard, and I noticed that it has the same distinctive feel of the rest of the keyboard, eventhough it's a large round button like the console keys. This means the XE Game System keyboard is not made of the same unit as the 130/65XE keyboard, and if something breaks, you can't tap that large collection of parts. Otherwise, the keyboard is completely identical to the XE keyboard in feel, shape and layout. You almost wonder why they bothered to make a new one.

The cable that attaches the keyboard to the main unit is about 12 inches long and plugs in on the left hand side in a recessed port. It uses a connector much like the 850 interface printer port -- like a joystick connector but with more pins. I noticed someone thoughtfully included a little nub on the connector so when you plug in the keyboard cable, it fits snug and is not likely to come out when you pull on the keyboard, which is inevitable. The keyboard also has hooks at the back allowing you to connect it to the main unit, forming a single piece. This was easy to do and I found myself switching from lap to desk-connected as the software I was using dictated. The main unit and keyboard connected together make up a 14x15 inch square, so be sure to have plenty of desk space for this system.

The main unit has the cartridge slot on the top, like an XL, but slanted at an angle matching the XE-style design, though there is no cover protecting the cartridge slot as on the XL. The joystick ports are on the right side, underneath and at an angle. This is the same sort of approach used first on the 1200XL and later on the 1040/520ST-FM. While it doesn't make it real easy to switch joysticks/lightguns, I didn't have any trouble with it at all, and it does make it more aesthetically pleasing and easier on the joystick connectors to have the cable coming out of the computer in the general direction of the rest of the joystick.

On the back of the unit I ran into something of a surprise -- an audio jack! A second later I realized that the XE game system has changed the

connector for the monitor output. Unlike the 5-pin DIN plug monitor jack on other 8bits, the XE system monitor output is supplied on two phono-plug jacks; one for sound, one for composite video. The television plug is next to these, but confusion is unlikely. Continuing across the back, there is no parallel bus connector. There isn't on the 65XE either (which this really is), but it means you can't use parallel bus peripherals like the MIO from ICD. Next is a standard SIO port to connect to Atari peripherals. Amusingly, in Atari's current school of design, they stamp an icon above each connector on the back to indicate what should plug in where. On the ST for example, there is a telephone over the RS232 port, and a diskette over the disk drive port. Following this school of thought, there are 4 icons crammed in over the SIO port! At least things are consistent. The power connector is identical to the previous XL/XE connector.

Having wrapped up the physical description, how does it run software? Like a 65XE. In fact, absolutely like a 65XE, which is no surprise since that's essentially what it is. But for safety's sake, I decided to give it a full-range compatibility test. In total, I tested 8 cartridges and a lot of disk software. One of the cartridges was a 600/800XL system diagnostics cartridge as well. Even this cart claimed that the system was an XE, and everything ran fine. During the testing of all this various software, I did notice some sort of twitch in the video. It only happened once every five or ten minutes that I saw, and the diagnostic cart didn't make it happen, but I checked the monitor and it was fine. I'll be investigating more XE Game Systems to find out if this is a factory trait or just a individual case.

A couple options come with the XE Game System that weren't previously available. Most notably the lightgun and a couple new cartridges. The System also has Missile Command built-in. Wherever it is, it's awfully well-hidden. I turned the machine on with no cartridge and it came up in BASIC. When I held down the OPTION key, it came up with the XL/ XE Self Test screen. Needless to say, it IS a 65XE. I never got a chance to test Missile Command because quite frankly, I didn't even remember it was there!

The Atari lightgun is at once the most fun addition and the biggest disappointment. One of the two cartridges that comes with the system is a bug-shootout game. At first, it seems rather simple-minded, but the more I played the more I enjoyed it, and it gets quite challenging. Unfortunately, the challenge isn't one to hone your skills on. The lightgun is easily the cheapest component of the system. The aim was noticeably off, even at point blank, and the "gun sights" formed into it's plastic case were completely useless. Sometimes you get the distinct impression that the gun's aim actually changes. I might

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attribute that to reviewer error, but having over half-million point scores on the gun game "Hogan's Alley" in the arcades, I have spent at least a hundred hours with a good, workable system and this doesn't come close. Still, after a while I was able to get 80+ percent "hit ratios" on the included game, so it can work. Owners of the game system may find that they "learn" the aim of their own guns and enjoy them more. We also tested the game cartridge and gun on a standard 130XE and 800XL, and they work fine. Perhaps Atari can be convinced to release the gun separately for existing Atari owners.

The other cartridge included with the system is Flight Simulator II. This in itself is an impressive feat. Flight Simulator II is a 128K cartridge, making it the largest Atari cartridge ever produced. Flight Simulator II itself is an amazingly accurate 3D solid-graphics flight simulation that lets you fly a Piper PA-28-181 Archer II, a single engine 148 mph aircraft. It also has a "Europe 1917" mode that lets you test your flying skill in World War I combat against enemy planes and ground targets. One advantage of the cartridge FS-II is instant load time. The original disk Flight Simulator II would occasionally pause to load additional scenery information from diskette. The FS-II cartridge instantly changes scenery for constantly smooth flight. I did not check to see if the FS-II cart. could read Flight Simulator scenery disks.

Of all the system, there was only one incompatibility that I discovered, that being a difference in the operation of the RESET key. On the XL/XE computer line, when you pressed and held down the RESET key, the system would be held, reset, in never-never land. This was often handy if you hadn't quite gotten the next disk in the drive yet or needed a second before the machine tried to boot. It also made a special technique for saving extended-memory RAMdisks possible, where if you locked the machine up, you could hit and hold RESET, insert a cartridge, release and hit RESET again, then remove the cartridge. The machine will always cold boot, but without ever having to shut the machine off, thus the RAMdisk contents are intact.

On the new XE Game System, the RESET key didn't reset on the way down, but reset when you release the button (on the way back up.) Holding the button in this halfway up state proved to be difficult at best. Since the XE Game System is otherwise identical to the 800XL, it is not unimaginable that some game system owners might want to add memory (a.k.a. a 256K standard upgrade,) in the future. The difference is more or less negligible.

All in all, the XE Game System is a fine Atari 8bit. As a new machine for people interested in gaming, the massive selection of Atari games makes it a far better value than Sega's & Nintendo's offerings, and the graphics are, of course, terrific. Add to that the fact it is a real computer, with all the versatility thereof, and it can't be beat. As a machine for new Atari owners, I judge it a better value than the 65XE, given the better keyboard and included software and gun. As a replacement or upgrade for existing Atari owners, it's a close call. The detachable keyboard is a joy to use. On the other hand, the lack of parallel bus capability is a big minus. More and more people are putting hard disk drives on their 8bits, and the "big" Atari 8bit (>256K of memory, several drives and/or a hard disk) is getting common. It might make a good "partner" machine.

Any way you look at it, the XE Game System is a good machine that will make it into a lot of homes, bringing new owners, new users, and yet more customers for Atari 8bit software. For 8bit owners everywhere, "Thanks Atari."

CYBER STUDIO

(CAD-3D 2.02 + CYBERMATE)

ST Software Review by Dante Stella

Recently, I purchased CAD-3D (v 2.02) from ANTIC software with the intention of easily creating animations. Although it wasn't as easy as I expected, CAD-3D is still a powerful package for your design needs.

The documentation for the package is clear and well-written, although the documentation for the included animation editor is 80+ pages, and you must print it out. A nice three-ring binder is included, so it looks tidy on a shelf!

On the whole, the object editing portion of the program is well-written and easy to use, although it may be somewhat slow when dealing with complex objects. Four views may be used at once, with optional full screen options. Objects may be seen in wire frame, hidden line, soft edge, and/or colored frame modes. Primitives and powerful spin (lathe) and extrude tools make creating complex objects easy but sometimes slow. A full range of rotation and camera controls is given.

Animation with this program is created with CAD-3D and edited/modified by the Cybermate program included in the package. In the final mode, it can take from 10 seconds to 1 minute to create a frame of animation, but in some cases draft mode gives comparable quality at ten times the speed. Still frames may be created in DEGAS or NeoChrome formats.

All in all, this is a good package for you if you are interested in animation, design, graphics, or the like. If you can live with the $90 price, it may just be what you were looking for in a graphics package. Cyber Studio, Antic Software, 544 Second Street, San Francisco, CA 94107.

ST Notes

by LeRoy Valley (TAG)

Last month I mentioned a PD program called Monoware. This little GEM allowed you to run monochrome software on a color monitor. Well, I've just received a new product for review called ST Omnires (by Hypertek/Silicon Springs Development Corp.) that also accomplishes this feat -- and a whole lot more!

This unique piece of software allows you to run all three resolutions on either a color OR monochrome monitor. The software is carried by E. Arthur Brown, a company that specializes in unique products for the ST.

Running ST Omnires is easy enough... simply put the disk in the drive and boot your system. There are 8 programs in the Auto folder named Omnires1.prg through Omnires8.prg. You will be greeted with a screen where you choose one of eight possible modes for color emulation on monochrome monitors or monochrome emulation on color monitors or TVs. (More on these modes later). Once you determine which mode you like, copy the correct Omnires program to an Auto folder on your disk, then run Makekey.prg...

What!! What is Makekey you ask? This is Hypertek's attempt at copy-protecting the disk, and it really isn't a bad method. Simply run Makekey.prg and a special software "Key" is read into ram and transferred to the destination disk. Now your ST Writer disk (or whatever) will run Omnires without ever asking for the original! The user can make unlimited backups, but he must have the original as it is read each time Makekey is run. There is one drawback to this method, however, and it involves autobooting hard drives (like my Supra). Makekey will not transfer the key to the hard drive, and since I have two floppies, ST Omnires requires a Key disk in drive B. I talked with Hypertek and they indicated that they were addressing that problem, and the next release would allow you to boot Omnires from C without needing a Key disk.

ST Omnires is a godsend for monochrome-only owners who have been drooling over the multitude of software available for color systems. When ST Omnires is booted, you get a selection of eight possible modes. A program called Rename.prg renames the Omnires program you want to .PRG, and renames the rest to .PRX. I highly recommend replacing Rename with STselect from Michtron if you have it -- it's considerably faster.

Mode 1 shows Low rez on 1/4 of the screen (it's like having a 5" diagonal monitor), Medium rez is displayed on 1/2 of the screen, you have only two shades (black and white) and the screen updates *very* quickly. Mouse movement is very smooth.

Mode 2 displays Low rez on 1/2 of the screen, Medium rez is full screen, you have 4 grey scales, and the screen updates slightly slower than Mode 1. Mouse movement is slightly jerky. The picture looks sharp and is easy to read.

Mode 3 displays both Low and Medium rez as full screen, you have 16 grey scales, (still only four shades in Medium rez) and screen update is significantly slower (for Low rez only). Mouse movement in Low rez is *very* jerky. In this mode, the screen looks fabulous!

Mode 4 is a slightly enhanced version of Mode 3. You must have 1 meg or more to use this mode. There is a slight speed increase in screen updates, and the mouse moves a little better. I'd place this mode's speed half way between 2 and 3.

MODES 5-8 are identical to 1-4 with the exception that the color palette is reset whenever necessary. These four modes are used for running color programs that try to reset the screen colors during the program's execution.

I have found Mode 2 to be about the best for emulating a color monitor, while still retaining fairly smooth mouse movement and quick screen update. The program works as advertised, and everything I tried (about 70 programs) worked flawlessly! The one exception was Spectrum 512, but then again who would buy Spectrum 512 and run it without color?

The only programs that you might not be able to run are ones that autoboot from drive A. If you can't get a directory of the disk, then it probably won't run. However, autobooting programs that contain an AUTO folder will run. Programs like Time Bandit, Winter Games, and Mean 18 work just fine!

Have a Color Monitor?

ST Omnires also allows you to emulate a monochrome monitor on your color monitor! The Omnires programs automatically check to see which monitor you have. If you have a color monitor, then the program enters monochrome emulation, and if you have a monochrome monitor, it enters color emulation. Although you can use Modes 1-3 (the manual says that you can use Mode 4, but the Read.me file on the disk says you can't) every mode is identical in mono emulation mode. So...might as well pick Omnires1.prg.

Once loaded and the monochrome screen is displayed on your color monitor (and it does look very nice!), you can select from four display modes. These four modes can be cycled through at any time by pressing the SHIFT/ALT/HELP keys...even in the middle of your favorite program!

The first mode (default) is a scaled representation of the 640x400 screen. Since it's hard to squeeze 200 pixels into 400, small text tends to look

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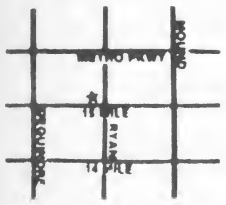

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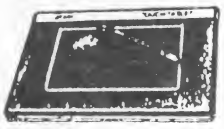

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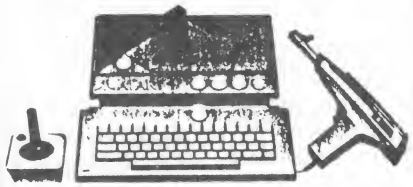

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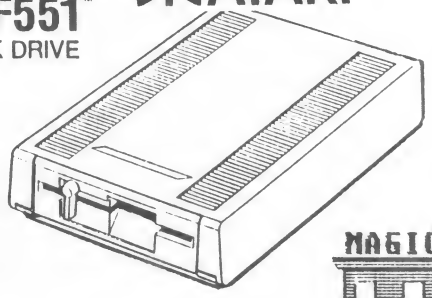

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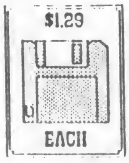

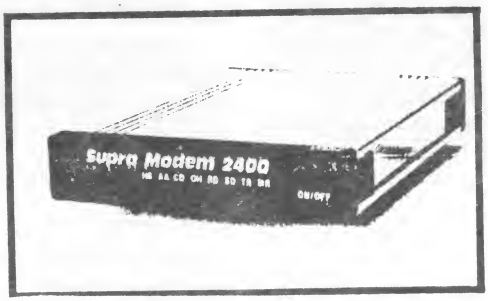

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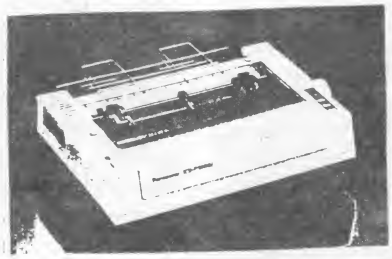

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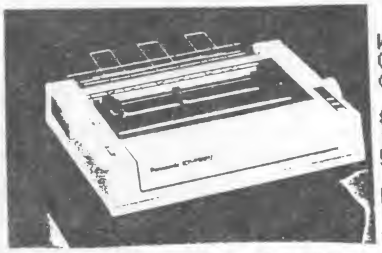

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slightly blurred. However, in most cases the Mono screen looks sharper than the corresponding color screen!

The second and third views are full-scale top and bottom views of the 640x400 monochrome screen. The most interesting of all is view 4, which is a full double-height screen which scrolls up and down by moving the mouse! You get the full 640x 400 display, and it looks terrific! Publishing Partner and Athena II looked fantastic in this mode. I tend to actually work in view 4, and switch to mode 1 for an overall picture. Power Print from Alpha Systems actually prints pictures at twice the normal resolution! As a bonus, if you use the ALT-HELP keys to do a screen dump, you get twice the resolution on your printer!

But, as the saying goes, there's no such thing as a free lunch. You will pay a small price for all of these goodies, and that price is speed. Running a simple benchmark program that timed the CPU, I tested the various modes.

Monochrome emulation mode runs approximately 20% slower than normal color mode on a color monitor. Since there are 8 modes for color emulation, I've placed the results in the following table:

PROGRAM	LOW REZ	MED. REZ
Omnires1 & 5	13.5%	25.0%
Omnires2 & 6	20.0%	27.0%
Omnires3 & 7	160.0%	29.0%
Omnires4 & 8	102.0%	27.0%

As you can see, Low rez emulation can get rather slow using Mode 4 and 8. Overall, I give the product an A+ for ingenuity and usefulness. It does it's job well and the nice little touches, like the scrolling view, make it a polished package.

ST Omnires runs on 520s, 1040s, and Megas. Documentation is rather skimpy, and printed in very tiny, blurred text. But that is the *only* thing that I can nitpick about! This package is a "gotta have!"

ST Omnires, $34.95 E. Arthur Brown Colorado. 3404 Pawnee Drive Alexandria, Minnesota 56308 (612)762-8847/763-6393.

Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing!

Review by Russell Crum (WAUGI)

COMPANY: The Software Toolworks
COMPUTER: ST and 8bit PRICE: Approx. $30

If you're looking for a way to ease your pain a bit in learning to type or need some assistance in improving your typing skills, this program may be just what the teacher ordered. This review is subjective and is not a comparison with similar programs available for the Atari or any other computer. The computer used for this review was an Atari 1040ST. The documentation states that the program is also available for the Atari 8bit, IBM, Apple II and IIGS, Amiga, and Commodore 64.

Mavis Beacon is a quite well-done program in that it makes good use of graphics and incorporates a rather good set of artificial intelligence routines. It utilizes several different techniques to assist you in improving both your speed and accuracy.

There is also an extensive set (21) of bar graph presentations on your progress, error modes, etc. that can be reviewed at any time. You start by telling Mavis your name, skill level, and length of practice sessions that you desire.

You may also set a number of other parameters such as word processor/typewriter mode (i.e. whether word wrap is invoked or the "return" key must be used at the end of each line.) You also can alter some of the criteria that Mavis uses to make decisions. You then start your "lessons."

Initially, these will follow some predetermined pattern based on the skill level that you indicated. Shortly, you will note that a lesson is aimed at resolving some particular problem pattern that you are exhibiting (at typing, that is). Each lesson states the objective and how that lesson will be conducted. You always have the opportunity to alter the lesson. Some alternatives are repeating the last lesson, skipping the proposed lesson, having Mavis chose another lesson, and making up your own lesson. You can also just have free typing practice instead of a lesson.

Lessons may consist of typing text that is presented on the screen (with several variations), typing from printed text out of the manual that comes with Mavis, and "race course" (sort of a game). Much of the time you will have a metronome running on the screen to help pace yourself. Errors are flagged both visually and with a buzzer. You may correct errors if you activated the backspace key in your setup. Each lesson concludes with indicating your speed and accuracy for that lesson. Some individual lessons are timed and are typically 2-4 minutes.

Other features include: a Help function that can be invoked any time; Keys and Fingers which will show you the correct finger to use for any key; the keyboard may be switched to the Dvorak style; the keyboard with your hands in silhouette are on the screen in most lessons (this is not in the 8bit version).

Also included on the disk is a resume writer program. This program asks you for data about yourself, then organizes the information into a

properly formatted resume. I haven't tried that feature, so I cannot comment on it. The 60-page manual contains a tutorial on learning to type, an explanation as to how the program functions, the history of the typewriter and the Dvorak keyboard, typing exercises and a bibliography.

Gripes? Yes, a few. First, the program is copy-protected. Software Toolworks will supply backup disks for $5, or a noncopy-protected version for $10.

Second, my original version (1.0) of the program tended to crash periodically, and, when typing from text in the manual, the screen text would not scroll, so after a short time you could not see what you were typing. In other modes, the lesson text is displayed on the screen and the text you type is displayed underneath.

The crashes were not every lesson, but often enough to be quite irritating (in my opinion, a commercial program like this should not crash at all!). I complained on my registration card about the crashes. I later received, unsolicited, an updated version (1.1) from The Software Toolworks. I was duly impressed!!

Incidentally, these are the same people that put out Chessmaster 2000 -- a great chess game!

Anyway, the crashing seems to have been resolved. The screen not scrolling correctly when typing external text has not. There was, and still is, an incompatibility between my ramdisk and Mavis. I've decided that is my problem though.

It is also possible that the screen scrolling problem is a conflict with one of my other accessories.

My third gripe is an irritant since I'm used to using a hard disk -- it takes about 2 minutes to load the program and data from floppy. If I weren't irritated at being charged an extra $10, I could solve this last complaint.

Does Mavis work? It sure has for me! I had made several attempts to recover my typing skills(?) of some 30+ years ago. I found that trying to follow a typing text was just too boring and it wasn't sufficient to sort out problems. I didn't want to enroll in a class somewhere (someone my age competing with people who had a real incentive to learn to type, you've got to be kidding!).

After about a month of 20-30 minute sessions, I can consistently hit 33-37 WPM, after penalties for errors. Having started as a dyed-in-the-wool two-finger typist, I feel pretty good about that!

For the most part, it has been fun. Mavis changes the lesson format often enough, isolates and has you work on specific problems quickly enough, that you feel you are making real progress.

I highly recommend Mavis to anyone who feels the need to acquire or improve their typing skills.

Super Directory from MichTron

ST Software Review by Steve Mileski (GLASS)

I have most of my software library backed up in an archived form on over a dozen double-sided disks. I was keeping track of the contents of each disk with a data manager program. Every time I added a file to one of the disks, a note was taped to the computer desk reminding me to update the data manager file. This was time consuming, awkward, and quite often inconsistent. Ah-ha! An excellent application for Super Directory (SD), a disk cataloging program written by Mark Feldman and marketed by MichTron of Pontiac, Michigan. It retails for $39.95.

So, what can SD do? Just about everything -- almost. It is GEM-based, with it's data file memory resident, so it's *very* fast! It even runs from the hard drive and is not copy-protected (yea!). How does it work? Run the program, and from the window, start by selecting (DISK option) the drive (A–P) that you want to catalog. That's right, it will even catalog your hard drive.

Now select ADD, a must on the first use. The program asks for a three-digit identifier, which can be saved to that disk or drive. After it reads in the volume label and directory of as many disks and drives as you want, it offers several options. (Now is a good time to mention that the path name has a limit of 24 characters, including backslashes, so the program will not include items buried deep in folders unless the folder names are short. This is not well documented in the manual but does tell you at ADDing time. This condition usually applies to hard drive users.) Now that you have a file to work with, you can explore some of the other options.

FIND helps you locate certain files, folders, disks, and extenders. As with all of the other options, a "search mask" must be defined like "SD.PRG" and can include pathnames. The mask also allows the use of wildcards "*" and dummies "?" like FIND "*.RSC". LOAD allows you to load in a file that was previously created for EDITing. If there is already a file in memory, then you can MERGE another existing file into it.

SAVE allows you to save the whole file or a subset (selected by FIND ALL mode, specifying something like *.PRG) of just the files you wish grouped together. EDIT lets you add remarks to the file entries. The remark can be from a predefined list (modified by the MACROS selection) with just a "point and click" or you can put in your own. You can also provide a one character category which is useful in the SORT and FIND functions. Using the Window and Window+ helps you step from data item to data item to add remarks and

catagories. PATH allows you step through the data file by pathname -- useful when your data is sorted by pathname.

PRINT is what we've been waiting for. We need hard copy of our data file for easy reference to our disk contents. Unfortunately, this function doesn't get the highest of grades. First, the good points. You can select to print only the folders, files, extenders, disk identifiers, or categories you wish by again using the search mask after having sorted by any of the above. The bad points include no "top of form" before or after printing, and the printout doesn't include any header lines, page numbers, page breaks, or time/date insertion.

All in all, my comments are as follows...the GEM interface is great! The Options are thorough. The operation is *fast!* The PRINT function is poor but useable. The documentation could be better written and more complete, but a little experimenting helps clear it up. It would be nice to have expanded Remarks capabilities. It would be nice to have a disk label-maker included. The program runs smoothly, quickly, cleanly and has good internal prompts. In spite of it's few shortcomings, it is a good, usable program. Thank you, Mark Feldman!

Take ACTION! with Your Programming!

by Gayle R. Sims (c) March 1988

ACTION!, a language development system, available on cartridge from ICD/OSS, is one of the most popular languages used today on the Atari 8bit computer.

In this series of articles, I will introduce you to ACTION!, and its many attributes, uses, and extensions. Hopefully, you will be able to grasp more than a novice's understanding of this powerful, yet easy to use, language.

In order to follow along with my articles and examples, you will only need the ACTION! cartridge itself, and the documentation that accompanies it. No other packages or utilities will be needed.

Why Should You Learn to Use ACTION!?

If you are a BASIC programmer, you have quickly learned that although your programs work just fine, they can be extremely slow and bulky. The same program, when written in ACTION!, can run up to 40 times faster! That sounds like the speed of machine language! It almost is!

ACTION! compiles your source code into machine language, allowing your program to communicate with your computer as if it were written directly *in* machine language.

ACTION! is a highly structured and modular language, unlike Atari BASIC. This lets you program module by module, concentrating on each routine individually, making your programming much neater, easier, and more efficient.

A structured and modular language also allows you use other programmers' routines (with permission of course) in your own programs, without the hassle of trying to transcribe line after line of scrambled Atari BASIC code.

An Example

Let me show you a comparison between Atari BASIC and ACTION!. The following examples will demonstrate a simple counting program in both languages.

ATARI BASIC

```
10 REM Number Counting Routine
20 FOR X=1 TO 800
30 PRINT X
40 NEXT X
50 END
```

ACTION!

```
PROC MAIN()
  INT X
  FOR X=1 TO 800
    DO
      PrintF("%I%E",X)
    OD
RETURN
```

With just three lines of Atari BASIC code being converted to ACTION! code, you can see a speed increase of about 4 percent. As your program grows, the actual running speed will increase proportionately.

Quite a difference will be noted, especially in game applications and graphic-intensive programs.

Be assured that in future articles, I will explain most aspects of ACTION!, including setting up your programming disks, learning the Editor, using the compiler, and much, MUCH more!!!

See you next time!

Ordering and support for ICD/OSS products are available by calling 815/968-2228 from 8AM to 5PM CST Monday through Friday. For more information, write to: ICD/OSS, 1220 Rock Street, Rockford, IL 61101.

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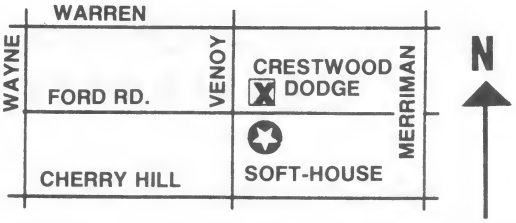

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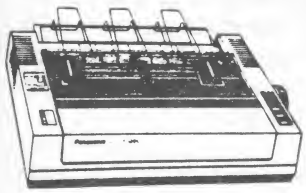

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Another Eight-bitter Bites the Dust!

by Gordon Totty, MACE (CIS 79157, 1212)

I did it. I crossed over the line, fell off the wagon, gave up the faith, succumbed to temptation, sinned in my heart (but not like Jimmy, this time), slipped on one of life's little banana peels, flew the coop, went over the wall.... yes, all of this, and more. There are so many ways to leave your lover, as Mr. Simon pointed out. Before you criticize me, though, answer where were you when I needed you? I faced this crisis all alone, and through my cursed weakness of flesh and meanness of spirit--failed. Yes, another Eight-bitter bites the big bits, because I bought a 1040ST.

That's why I haven't been around much lately. I have changed my habit patterns. I've been burning a lot of midnight oil playing with a mouse, and trying to coax it to do tricks for me. Too often, when I point at something particularly interesting and bang the little fellow on the head, the computer bombs out. I have created displays of up to ten bombs for one tiny infraction. But I'm having fun!

While I am still very new to the 1040, it might be valuable to my friends still residing entirely in Eight-bit land to read a few of my first impressions. Among these are...

The 130XE still seems to have a better keyboard for typing, at least with respect to the "feel" of the keys. Neither keyboard, by the way, has a little raised bump on the "f" and "j" keys, something IBM and others offer. This is a nice way for a touch typist to locate the home row keys with tactile assurance. I solved this on both computers with a small bit of tape on the two keys. It is amazing how little it takes to send a signal through the fingertips.

The ST has many more keys for many more uses, as I am sure you know, but also has the advantage of placing the apostrophe to the right of the semicolon, just like IBM and others. This is the biggest stumbling block as I move from one computer to the other. I have to stop and think every time I make a contraction or possessive. Other key assignments differ, too, but none cause me the problem of the apostrophe placement.

I suppose I should be embarrassed to admit that I did not know that the ST's three screen resolutions were not all available in color. The highest resolution is not. One of the things that motivated me to buy an ST was looking at a monochrome display of a word processor running on an ST. I was stunned at the clarity and crispness of the display. I leaned closer and peered through my bifocals to study each letter closely. I was looking for the fat pixels and the spaces between them, and saw none.

"Wow!" I said, and that summed it up. Double wow. It was beautiful. It is also nonexistent on the color monitor.

My early impression is that letter for letter, and considering that the 80-column display makes letters smaller than the 40-column display, I am experiencing a sensation of no better resolution doing word processing on an ST compared to my 130XE. This is a very subjective assessment, possibly influenced by bifocals and false expectations based on the monochrome display, so please don't write in to snow me with technical data. I merely caution those of you who have not crossed the big divide to consider the importance of this to you before you jump, and do some good A/B comparisons to experience it first. Avoid being disappointed like I was. Then jump; it's still worth the trip.

As for resolution, the ST's medium resolution mode is weird! There is a distortion where the vertical is exaggerated relative to the horizontal. Things look tall and skinny, distorted -- there's no better word for it. This is another disappointment. It does not show up in a lot of the commercial software as they appear somehow to compensate for this in the graphics, but text is another matter. I see this distortion in the text of my word processor, though not quite to the degree as it appears in the icons in the initial screen.

Speaking of software brings me to the major advantage of the ST. The programs are, largely, awesome. I am amazed to remember the days of the 400 with its 16K limit, and contrast them to today's ST software. It is nothing for these programs to use 200K, 300K, or more! I even have a couple of demo disks that will not run on an unexpanded 520ST. And splurging on the bytes shows in what you see on the screen and what you can do. Thank goodness for the cheap chip.

I'm going to stop here with that train of thought, as my intention is not to do a complete comparison (what would be the point!), or even to do a complete catalog of what might be right or wrong with the ST. I have shared with you what I intended: the most important of my first impressions. Unfortunately, some were strongly negative, but I am glad to be an STer. Overall, it is quite a machine!

As of this writing, Analog owes me 16 issues, as I renewed just as they ran into "printing difficulties". I am still wondering if the main printing difficulty is getting cash to the printer. So, while looking around for something else in which to read about the ST, I came across ST X-Press. By all means, get a copy of this magazine if you haven't seen it yet. It is jammed with ST news and

reviews. The two issues I have are each about 80 pages, and this is 80 pages of nearly uninterrupted text. So far, ST X-press carries very little advertising. ST X-Press just celebrated the end of its first year of publication, and I hope my favorable comments haven't given it the "kiss of death."

My regular readers (i.e., honey and the kids) will remember that I wrote a glowing review of Home Computer Monthly, just in time for that publication to die. In fact, my review may have been written after their last regular issue, although they did finish out my subscription with some less professional product. I am not complaining; they were honorable and paid off their obligation to me, which is much more than I can say about a certain not-to-be-named furniture dealer in North Carolina who took my deposit with him into bankruptcy court, and then sent me discount coupons in case I wanted to buy from his reconstructed company again! And that, friends, is what a southerner taught a northerner about the evils of reconstruction. End of history lesson.

There are bargains galore in the Atari software market. It's scary. Seems like people everywhere are practically giving away the 8bit stuff, which I am still buying. Rumor has it that unfavorable announcements about the Atari market were made by Electronic Arts and Infocom. I won't repeat any of them as I have heard and read different versions of each. These rumors may have started another round of dumping.

I was elated and depressed (a dangerous condition) by a recent ST software sale. A local merchant decided to no longer stock ST software or hardware. Sales personnel told me two reasons. First, they are very upset over what they said Atari is expecting from Mega dealers. According to them, Atari was demanding that they attend a two-week seminar at their expense and buy a $3,000 tool kit. The tool kit upset them more than the trip to the seminar.

Second, they said that the Atari software took up too much shelf space. Ouch!! This store stocks Apple software as well as Amiga and IBM. I think the comment can only mean that proportionately they are making more per foot of shelf space on the other stuff, and believe the space devoted to Atari is holding the store's profits down.

I will not name the store, as I might not have heard what I was told correctly, or I might have misinterpreted the significance of the comment about Atari software. For whatever reasons, however, this store ran one heck of an Atari sale---70% off all software. My elation, tempered by sadness at seeing another one bite the dust, came from my just happening to walk into this place at just the right time. The sale had just begun; the ad had not yet run! (Good Lord, poetry too?) I immediately grabbed about seven titles plus a book off the shelves and went back the next morning to buy six more titles. A buyer's bonanza. It felt good, but I hope I do not see any more of this.

Come on folks, I just got here!!! Let's stay in business, shall we?

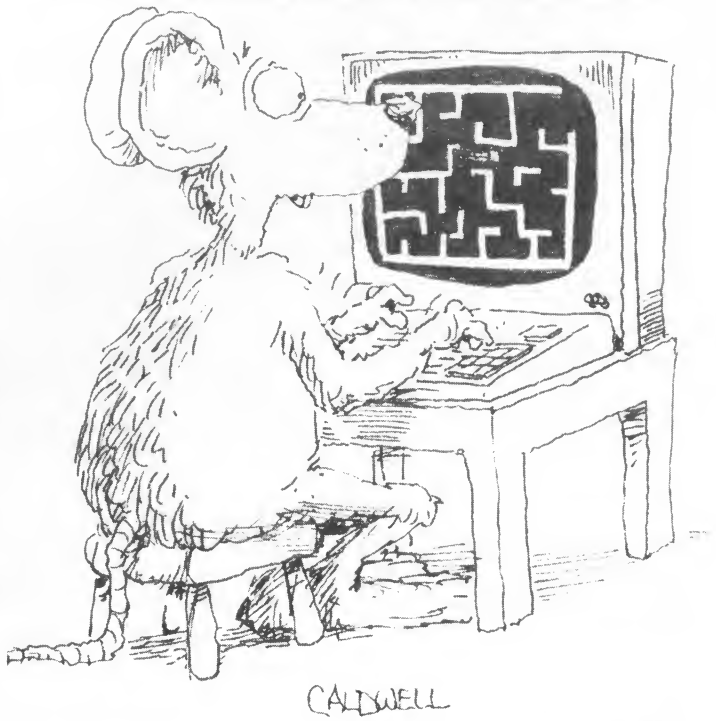
One thing that hurt was my budget. I walked away from a laser printer for less than $1,000. And I had to swallow an urge to say, "I'll take all of the software!" Wouldn't I have been a hero on rummage sale night! Or swap night, or whatever it is that we call my favorite meeting night.

Last thought for this month: Are you an "Atarist" or an "Atarian"? I'm seeing Atarist showing up in publications lately. I prefer Atarian, because it preserves the Atari name, both when pronounced and when read. I hope this doesn't turn into a group-splitting debate, like 8vs.16 you-know-whats. I plan to continue using both computers, and have already installed a data switch for both to access my printer. As for the names, whichever you choose has got to be preferable to being described by as ugly a word as "Michigander." Good grief, I'd rather be goosed!

P.S. Drop me a line on CompuServe, or on GEnie (Gordon-Totty). I'd love to get some reactions to my written rantings. Since my very first submission, when Anne McBain Ezell called me at home, I never know if I'm wasting your time or not.

As for me, I usually smile when I see my articles printed (ego trip!), then fly into uncontrollable rage if the editor changes a comma (*bigger ego trip!!*). That's not enough psychic income, folks, which may be the real gripe when people say volunteer work is "thankless." Please understand that I'm fishing for feedback, not just strokes. So, feed back, please.

P.P.S. Just kidding, editor; you give good edits!



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Empire -- Wargame of the Century

ST Software Review by Bill Rayl

[Special thanks to Interstel for providing the copy of Empire used for this review.]

Requirements: 520 or 1040 ST, Color or Monochrome monitor, NOT Copy-protected

No doubt about it. Empire is the most playable war game available for the ST. Actually, to call it a "war game" is really unfair -- this game has a much broader appeal. Many confirmed anti-war gamers have gotten hooked on Empire, which traces its origins to DEC-10 mainframes where I first encountered the game.

What is Empire?

Empire is a game of strategy and skill which you and up to two opponents struggle to dominate the world. You and your opponents begin with one city on an otherwise unexplored world. Out there in the vast blackness of uncharted territory are cities to conquer, and ultimately, an enemy to defeat.

As your armies take over more cities and your empire grows, you will begin to build a navy and air force, commanding fighters, submarines, destroyers, battleships, aircraft carriers and the list goes on.

Of course, all the time your opponents have been doing the same! They're out there -- somewhere, and when you finally meet the enemy, that's when the game really beings!

Beginning the Game

Minimum requirements for running Empire are a 520 ST with either a color or monochrome monitor. The games comes on a single-sided, unprotected disk, so you can play from RAMdisk or install it on your hard drive (thank you, Interstel!). Instead of copy-protection, the game requests that you enter a "code word" from the manual (a different word each time you boot).

Once you've been cleared, the Empire desktop appears where you have three major choices -- New Game, Load and Map Editor. The Load option allows you to resume a previously saved game, and the Map Editor allows for creation of you own maps or changes to existing ones. When starting a new game, you get to choose up to three human or computer opponents. Computer opponents can be either "standard" or "expert." In one outing, I chose two expert computer opponents, and found myself fighting a two-front war, trapped between my adversaries. Needless to say, I was slaughtered.

When choosing two or three human players,

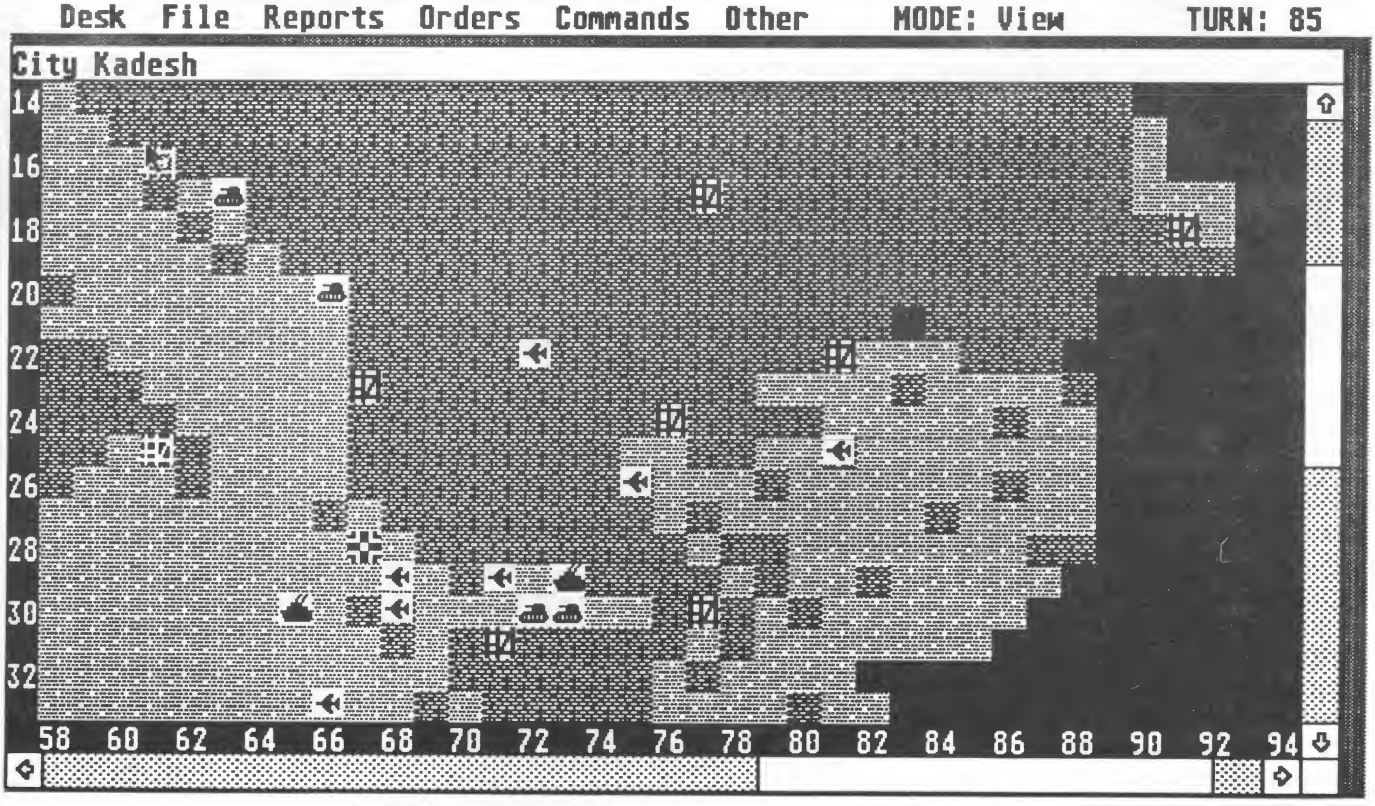


FIGURE 1 Sample Game Screen from Empire

Empire has a couple nifty features. A fundamental part of Empire is the fact that each player has no idea what the others are up to *until* the opponents stumble onto one another. With more than one player in the room, this becomes a little tricky.

Each player must take his/her turn and then turn the computer over to the next player and so on. At the outset of the game, before any real combat begins, this could look less like a strategy game and more like a game of musical chairs. Empire has a simple and effective solution -- players take multiple turns until someone encounters an opponent (usually about 100-130 turns into the game!).

Another feature for multiple human opponents is the play-by-mail option. After each turn, the game is automatically saved and can be sent to a distant friend via mail or uploaded via modem. The documentation also states that a future version of Empire will allow for interactive play via modem.

Once players are selected, you can also set efficiency rating for each player -- in essence, it's a way to set handicaps to make games more fair between experienced and novice players. You can vary combat and/or production efficiency.

Making the Moves

The game itself is easy to play, very intuitive and surprisingly fast-moving for a strategy war game. You move your armies with the arrow keys, keypad or by clicking on the place you wish your unit to be. There are also commands for setting up a patrol area or flight path, sentry duty, group commands (for moving many units), an escort command for ships to protect your troop transports, and even a command to automatically move troops in a random fashion (like real recruits) if you can't think of anything better to do!

Commands are orders can be given either by point-and-click or by keyboard input. The game comes with a handy reference card with an alphabetical listing of commands followed by the mouse of keyboard designations for those commands.

Playing for Keeps

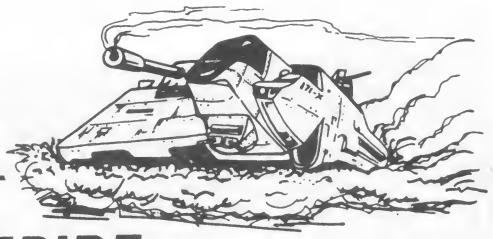
The initial moves of the game happen quickly as you explore new territory, capture cities and begin producing more troops. As the number of units you command grows, your turns take longer (group commands speed this up tremendously), but the game never bogs down. Tension actually builds with each player's army. During one campaign, I began to notice a slightly longer pause during my opponent's turns. "He must have a *huge* army," I thought, and began furiously building up my own! It's an eerie feeling knowing that the enemy is up to something and you don't know what it is.... this software knows how to capitalize on paranoia!

Empire is also very addictive and eventhough a typical game lasts the better part of a day, you just don't want to stop! You keep saying to yourself, "Just a few more moves...there's another city over there to conquer...I can't quit now while I'm in the middle of this battle...." A couple times, I've pulled myself away from a heated battle to find it's four o'clock in the morning and I've spent the last seven hours trying to take over the world.

The Empire packaging and manual both sport a warning concerning the effect Empire can have on your life. "Empire -- Wargame of the Century has been known to be addictive," the manual explains. "Interstel assumes no responsibility for lost productivity on the part of the player(s)." Before playing, I thought this was just ad hype. Was I wrong! The mainframe version was mildly addictive, but this version from Interstel is downright habitual!

The ST version of Empire is a great improvement over the mainframe version, adding many powerful new commands, more diversity and an increased playability without losing a single feature that made the mainframe version one of the most popular games around.

If you haven't figured it out by now, I wholeheartedly recommend this game to all ST owners. There is much, much more to this game than I have mentioned; I've given you a brief glimpse and the rest is up to you. As for me, I'm off to another campaign on the Barbary Coast...or maybe Southeast Asia...or maybe....



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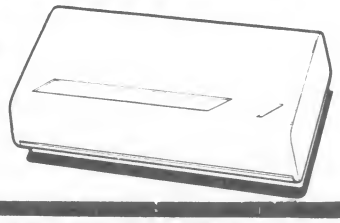

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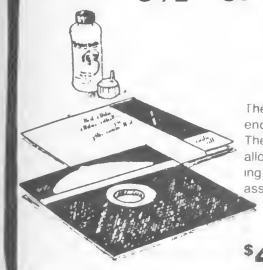

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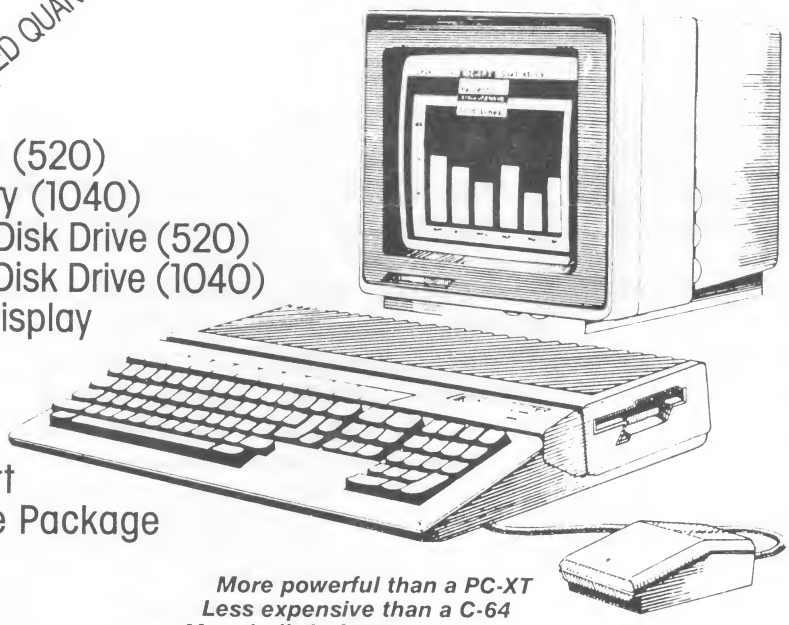

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WordPerfect: If This Is Perfection, I'd Hate to See Mediocrity

ST Software Review by Rod Smith

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In the computer world, there are certain programs against which all others are measured. Lotus 1-2-3, Excel, and Infocom games, for instance, are often used as standards. In the field of word processing, one such program (at least in the MS-DOS world) is WordPerfect. Now, WordPerfect is available for the Atari ST.

WordPerfect, the ads would have you believe, represents power for the ST -- but *with* a price, unless you happen to be eligible for the educational discount. The question is: does WordPerfect for the ST deserve the reputation it has earned on the IBM? The answer is both yes and no.

Before going further, I would like to state that I first received the program in early November, but found it to be in such poor condition that I couldn't bear to review it seriously -- although I did upload what amounted to an extended and elaborated list of bugs to a couple of Ann Arbor BBSes. WordPerfect Corporation promised to have a revised version out sometime in December, so I decided to give them the benefit of the doubt and wait for that version. It is this revision, delayed, the Jan. 8 version, which I now review.

First the good news: WordPerfect does indeed offer a great deal of word processing power. Many companies and, I suspect, many purchasers of word processors, seem to think a few flashy features such as a built-in real-time spell checker or an outline processor make a great word processor. They do not. I have found in using perhaps half a dozen word processors on the ST as well as programs on other machines, what really counts are the little things. Does a program allow searches for carriage returns? Can it handle soft hyphens? Does it have a cursor move by word function? These are the sorts of features which distinguish the truly great programs from those which are merely flashy.

True, such major features as a spell-checker or macro facility don't hurt, but they are less important in my own day-to-day use of a program than these minor features which often don't make it into the magazine advertizements.

WordPerfect offers such small but important features. The only other ST word processor with which I am familiar which offers a similar lineup is The FinalWord, which is an awkward dinosaur of a program in most respects. (In fairness, I have not seen the latest offerings from the 1st Word and Word Writer lines.)

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Since a list of WordPerfect's minor, but important, features would be tedious, I will not detail them.

Some of the major features are a macro facility for easily executing a series of commands, a spell-checker (not a real-time one), thesaurus, multiple columns, a built-in print spooler, footnotes and endnotes, table of contents preparation, index compilation, and, of course, use of GEM. If you rely on your word processor for more than letters to Aunt Matilda, WordPerfect probably offers something desirable which the competition does not.

Before the serious word processing junkies begin trembling with anticipation though, there is a downside. Expressed succinctly, WordPerfect is the buggiest program I have ever seen on any computer, with the exception of programs in the midst of being written. The program will occasionally lock up or restrict one's actions for no apparent reason; the automatic backup option kicks in only when a function is selected; the program will behave insanely if you load a 1st Word or ST Writer file; and so on. Most of these bugs existed in the earlier version; a couple are new to the January release.

To their credit, WordPerfect has fixed what I consider to be the two most obnoxious bugs in their product, but the program is still frustrating to use. This could especially be the case to the new user attempting to set up the program. Although I had done it before with the earlier version, I could not get the printer selection process to work correctly. I finally called WordPerfect's 800 customer support line, and managed to get my printer installed. A novice user, however, might simply have given up in frustration.

Aside from the bugs, there are a number of design features which are questionable. WordPerfect does not use the bit-mapped display of the ST to the fullest; superscripts and subscripts are not displayed as such, even on a monchrome system, and page breaks are shown by a line of "-"s or "="s, depending upon the type of page break.

The scroll bar behaves in a nonstandard and confusing way. The standard Atari file selector box is not used in the program, so that you must often enter the entire pathname by hand. You may or may not be able to open multiple windows on a 512K machine. Macros are stored in the currently-selected directory, a serious problem for those with many directories of text files. And so on.

While some of these problems are minor, others cause a great deal of annoyance. The file selector box problem is particularly annoying to me, especially since, when I spoke to somebody at WordPerfect Corporation about it, he could not understand why I found their design so inferior to GEM's.

So what does this make the bottom line? I feel that most people should avoid WordPerfect. It is not worth $395, or even half that, as is, unless you're really desperate for a program with WordPerfect's power. Those eligible for the educational discount (principally students and educators) might consider the program, but only if they *need* the power. Beginners should avoid the program like the plague. Most people would be happier with Word Writer, or perhaps the new version of 1st Word (although, as I have said, I have yet to see the latest versions of these programs). Perhaps in a year or so, WordPerfect will have fixed most of the bugs in the program, and maybe even addressed some of the design flaws. Until that time, however, I must sadly conclude that, despite its unsurpassed power, WordPerfect on the ST is not the program for most people.

[Author's Note: Since I wrote this article, I've received yet another update to my WordPerfect package. This version seems much improved over the version I reviewed, and I have yet to make it crash. The package is now approaching useability by the more advanced user, but I still suggest the novice stay away from this software.]

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How many of the 50 computer words can you find? There should be 15 letters left over, they will make a message. If a word is repeated such as: key, move, log, it will not be within the same word. Look for it somewhere else. The words can be forward, backward, up, down or diagonally. -H.P. Neff

E E P Y T H A R D C O P Y T G
M X E D N I E I W O R K P T O
A D D A U T E X T A O E N D L
N M U L O C K E Y E R I D U A
I F U N C T I O N S R R G R C
K O D G F I X E D P E A O O I
E R N N R K N A L B R G T W G
Y M U S B A T W L I M O V E O
B A O A L R P A T O G R D E L
O T R I O A N H V T A I G L A
A T E S E R M E I L T A U L Y
A L I N E S R I L N S N T M O
D H P T A O T O C S G K M U N
M A X H W A D R E E E U I A I
L E F T A H O M E Y D T T I S

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ADD
ALPHA
ALT KEY
ARROW
BAR
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COLUMN
COUNT
DECIMALS
DOLLAR
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EDIT
ERROR
EXTERNAL
FIXED
FORMAT
FUNCTIONS
GOTO
GRAPHING
HARDCOPY
HOME
INDEX
ITERATE
KEY
KEY BOARD
LEFT
LINES
LOCK
LOG
LOGARITHMS
LOGICAL
MAX
MESSAGE
MOVE
MOVE ROW
NAME
NOTE
NULL
PRINT
QUIT
REPT
RESET
ROUND
ROW
SIN
SQRT
TAN
TEXT
TYPE
WORK

CAPITOL HILL ATARI OWNERS SOCIETY

C.H.A.O.S. is the Capitol Hill Atari Owner's Society, serving the Atari community of the Lansing, Michigan area. The Campus Hill Atari Owner's SOciety is the Michigan State University chapter of CHAOS. Membership dues are $15.00 per year and entitle the member to a 1-year subscription to the Michigan Atari Magazine, a free disk from our regular library, and access to our libraries and other resources. Dues may be paid at any CHAOS meeting or by mail. Sysop John Nagy and CHAOS invite you to call one of the country's finest BBSes at 517-371-1106, 300/1200/2400 baud, 24 hours a day (ATASCII/ASCII) serving both the 8 and 16bit Atari computers. Send inquiries regarding C.H.A.O.S., mail orders, memberships and so on, to: CHAOS, PO Box 16132, Lansing, MI 48901.

General meetings of the membership are held several times a year. Eight-bit and 16bit Special Interest Group meetings are held monthly. The S.T. INterest Group meets on the Second Saturday of the month. The 8bit S.I.G. meeting, for 400/800, and XL/XE owners, takes place on the Third Saturday of the month. All meetings are held at the MSU Physics-Astronomy Building, Physics Road, Room 118. To get to a meeting, take East Grand River to the Collingwood Entrance for MSU. The first available left turn is Physics Rd. The Physics-Astronomy Building is about 1 block from the corner, on the right hand side. Park in the gated lot just past the building. Meetings begin at 10:00 am sharp and last until 1:00 pm. Members and guests are welcome to any SIG meeting that interests them. Illegal copying, or any violation of copyright laws, is not condoned or allowed at any CHAOSsponsored function, including the club BBS.

Elected and Appointed Officers of CHAOS

President	Leo Sell	349-0404
Vice Pres	John Baker	641-4430
Sec'y-Treas	Gary Ferris	393-2593
16bit Rep	John Johnson	337-7772
Membership	Gary Ferris	393-2593
Library Mgr	John Baker	641-4430
Libr	Innaiah Pothacamury	332-0558
ST Pub.Libr	Chet Kapusinski	676-4539
XL/XE SIG	Guy Hurt	484-7675
ST SIG Co.	Brian Goluska	332-4415
BBS Sysop	John Nagy	487-5646

Presidential Address

Welcome to March, blustery weather and the start of spring! I have several things to bring to your attention this month. First, the tardiness of your MAM last month was our fault. Several miscues resulted in our mailing the issues for CHAOS members adding a week to 10 days to mailing time. Second, a reminder. The March 8bit meeting is displaced by our Annual meeting. This year we are not only electing officers, we will also consider several adjustments and two amendments to the bylaws of the club.

In a sense, the March meeting is the most important of the year. Each of the elected positions is

filled at the annual meeting, perhaps by re-electing the incumbent, or by electing someone new. In any event you will have no voice unless you are there. ST SIG members will elect their member at large at their March SIG meeting. ST members should also attend and vote at the March 19 meeting.

At this writing I am still considering whether to run for re-election. I am contemplating going back to school and earning my bachelor's, in which case I will not be able to continue as president. Otherwise, I am likely to run. That's not to say that others shouldn't run as well, of course.

As far as I know, the office of vice president needs nominees, Gary Ferris intends to run for re-election, and the 8bit member at large is in need of a nominee. I will present details of the responsibility of each position, and the management structure of the club, before the vote at the meeting.

As for the bylaws, we will be considering several adjustments and two amendments. The adjustments and amendments are intended to address some weaknesses we found in recent analysis of the bylaws. The major changes, of course, are the two amendments. In a nutshell, the first amendment clarifies the manner in which an office may become vacant. The second amendment deals with dissolution of the club. We are not of course envisioning this as a necessity for the near future, but we feel it is an eventuality for which we must prepare.

As you can see, the March 19 Annual Meeting is of great importance to the Club. I hope you'll be there and help chart our future.

Atari St
Publishing Partner
Postscript

Now available at the State Street Computer Club!!

This AD was produced with Publishing Partner and a PSJet+ Laser Printer in the State Street Computer Club.

12 1/2% bank financing available while you wait.

STOP IN OR CALL

STATE STREET
COMPUTER

334 South State St
Ann Arbor Mi, 48104
(313) 663-0090

Other news concerns MAXIT-'88, on April 17 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Clarion Hotel. MAXIT is a local computer show built on past shows put on by several different organizers. As it was last year, the emphasis is on local dealers. However, the organizers have pressed the retailers to offer deals, deals, deals.

And unlike last year, there are several local Atari dealers, most of whom plan to be there. Look for discount deals, and more, from Computer Concepts, Castle Communications, Computer Emporium, Babbages, and perhaps Schubert Corporation.

CHAOS will have five tables, one of which we hope to dedicate to MIDI, the others to the disk libraries, demonstrations, and publicity materials. So, as always, we need volunteers to provide equipment and time. These shows offer an opportunity for membership growth, at a reasonable cost. Give me a call and pitch in with equipment or time.

CHAOS BBS Goes 2400 Baud!

Due to two different Avatex modem failures, we were faced with buying a new modem for the BBS. Although 2400 baud is not common, it is certainly on the upswing. So, we went the extra mile and bought a Smarteam 2400. Sadly, the first one shipped was defective and is being replaced, to be online sometime in the first week of March. Meanwhile, continue to join us on the CHAOS BBS, (517) 371-1106, at 300/1200 baud (using John Nagy's modem. much to his chagrin!)

Library News

The rental program has been a continuing success, and Library Manager John Baker is in the process of revising the disk library rental rates to reflect the huge growth in both the ST and 8bit libraries. The new rates are to be announced at the March General Meeting.

GENESEE ATARI GROUP
Serving the Flint area

Genesee Atari Group is a non-profit group of Atari Owners in and around Flint, Michigan. Our purpose is to provide assistance to users of Atari personal Computers. This organization is not affiliated with Atari, Inc. GAG meets on the second Wednesday of the month at the Neithercut Schol, located at 2818 Crestbrook Drive (Near Atherton and Hammerburg Rd.). During the school year we also have a 4th Saturday workshop at 9:30am. Membership is $15 and includes a subscription to the Michigan Atari Magazine.

Meeting dates

March 9	General	March 26	Saturday
April 13	General	April 23	Saturday

GAG Information:
Jerry Cross 736-4544
FACTS BBS 736-3920

President's Report

Finally! The catalogs are done, and you should be receiving them any day now. Sorry it took so long, but as you will see, there was a lot of work to do before we could send them (and they are already out of date!).

When you get your catalog, you will notice there is a questionnaire enclosed. Please take a few minutes to fill it out. It has been quite a while since we polled our members. We have no way of knowing what sort of equipment you have, or plan to buy. Heck, I'm not even sure how many of you own STs! So this survey is quite important. It will give us an idea what direction we should take the club and ideas on how to get there. What sort of programs are you interested in? How do you like Atari's dealers, service, products, etc..? What can the club do to help you learn about your computer?

But, unless you take that couple of minutes to fill out the survey and mail it back (we even sent an envelope!) we will not be able to plan anything. So please! Help us out. The results of our survey will be sent to Atari, local dealers, and anyone else who is interested.

See you at the next meeting.

Jerry Cross

GKAUG ATARI GREATER KALAMAZOO ATARI USERS GROUP

GKAUG meets the second Saturday of each month at 11:00 am in the Dewing Hall on the Kalamazoo College Campus. Dues are $20/yr.

President	Frank Fellheimer 657-6106
Vice President	Dan Youngs
Treasurer	Dave Bryant
Librarian	Steven Buechler
Archiver	Dave Oldenburg
ST Chairman	Jim Zinke
SysOp:	Alex Stevens
GKAUG BBS	(616)657-2665

Second meeting underway already and we had 16 members attending even after the "Big" snow storm of '88. First item on my list is to correct the telephone number for the GKAUG. I put down my home phone number...the BBS is not in my home, but I got a lot of calls...thank goodness you guys don't call at 3:00 in the morning.

Communications with the WAUG! group in Ann Arbor has produced a copy of the Cute Label program which I am having a little trouble with since I haven't figured out how to change the defaults for my Prowriter printer, however, it is compatible with the Epson series and will be available through our Archiver on our next meeting, March 12. Be there for this one, we will be doing a demo. It is easy to use with lots of fonts available.

We had a quantity of Analog magazines donated by Maggie Connell and the Librarian will soon have a listing of them so you will be able to request the ones you want. Since our reference library is getting large (and heavy) we will no longer bring it to the meeting. The disk library will be available and we will bring those magazines or books you request. Call me or Steve if you have any requests.

We did a short demo of "Tax Advantage." It seems easy to use, with plenty of menus. It's the time of the year to be looking at such programs. We also have a WAUG! listing of ST programs for you 16bit hackers. Zinke has the listing and will likely select something of use for our users. We haven't forgotten to include the ST users. Join us to get updated on our latest progress.

Next month:

1. Discussion on the use of the Merit BBS system.
2. Demo some basic utilities.
3. Demo Cute Label program.

Great Lakes Atari ST Support 'GLASS', Michigans only 'ST' only Users Group I ♡ my ST!

From the Desk of the President

Ahhhh, February....the Monday of the months! This month's general meeting featured MIDI, which was enjoyed by all. Thanks, Mike Gillie!

We also closed the collection for ARC and ARCshell contributions for the authors of those public domain and shareware programs. I am pleased to announce we will be sending out over $40. Next software to be collected for will be Lablejrb.prg by the Pittsburg Area Computer Enthusiasts (PACE). This program will be demonstrated at the March meeting by Byron Johnson, who will also write up a review and general instruction sheet to help you evaluate and operate it. It will be available in our public domain library.

Each month, the meeting will feature a seminar of some type of application and/or software. The March meeting demo, hopefully, will feature Juggler from MichTron. Juggler is a new multi-tasking program that allows you to have several programs running concurrently. The seminar will show the finer points of using DBmaster.one and Basetwo. These are two look-alike data manager programs for maintaining

files like addresses, recipes, collections and much more.

At the April meeting, we hope to show Super Directory, a disk cataloging program from Mich-Tron. See the SD review in this issue. The April seminar will be on using Publishing Partner, a popular desktop publisher, starting from text and graphics input, all the way to printer output.

In the near future (May maybe?), we will attempt to have Jonathan Kring, author of Personal Money Manager, tell us how to use double-entry bookkeeping in his program. This will also be applicable to many other financial programs.

Let us know if you have a favorite application or program that you would like to see a training seminar on. The seminars will be held in a separate room, and if you are not interested in the current month's fare, there will be open use of the other two computers in the general room.

So, the following is a (hoped for) agenda for the next several months at GLASS:

March Demos; Lablejrb (pub.dom.) and Juggler
Seminar; DBmaster.one and Basetwo
April Demo; Super Directory
Seminar; Publishing Partner
May Demo; (?)
Seminar; Personal Money Manager (?)

I hope you find seminar formats interesting and informative. Don't forget, each month one attending member will receive free, a purchased piece of software, and another member will receive the library's disk-of-the-month. At the February meeting, DUNGEON MASTER was taken home by Louis Fox. (Sorry Ken Settle, if you would have been here you would have gotten it!) The Disk-Of-The-Month went to Ed Hanson. Thank you, Byron Johnson, for re-submitting the software for drawing, after you won it!

See you at the MARCH meeting!

Steve Mileski

GRASS
GRAND RAPIDS ATARI SYSTEMS SUPPORTERS

President's Comments

A big thanks to all! It's great having the participation and enthusiasm we have in GRASS. Everyone's pitching in to do whatever is needed to get the job done. It sure makes my job easier. First off, I must apologize to Gerry Borysiak for listing him last month as Gary. I wish I could blame the computer, but we all know I can't! Sorry, Gerry.

Your board met on January 20th to organize for the year. The following are some of the more important items discussed.

1. outlined officers duties
2. will start putting meeting in paper and on cable TV
3. laid groundwork for BASIC programming seminar
4. laid groundwork for Atari Fare in April
5. discussed having a swap table(s) at May meeting 6. support of STs -- still in the air
7. monthly membership meeting programs -- Gary Heitz is in charge
8. membership chairman – new member packet
9. periodic demo of new software and raffling it off at meeting -- first one is April
10. better exchange of information

We will keep you up-to-date on these and other items as they develop. At the April meeting, we will have our first demonstrated software which will be then raffled off. Chuch Baughman has purchased News Station, and within 15 or 20 minutes had a really good-looking "newspaper" page. He is ordering another copy which he will demo. Raffle tickets will be $1 each or 3 for $2. If you absolutely, positively, under no circumstances cannot attend the meeting, send me a buck or two, and I will make sure your name is in the hat!

Speaking of demos, Joe Mann did a fantastic job at our February meeting demostrating his "lotto" type game. The graphics and colors were outstanding. Joe also gave us a very interesting and informative talk on some of his programming secrets he used to write "Lotto."

Tim Feenstra has agreed to be our Membership Chairman. He is also working on a "New Member packet." It will consist of a copy of the bylaws, library catalog, our questionnaire/membership list, etc. I think this will help new members become part of the group faster. Two more people joined last month. Roy and Laura McClure are from Jenison and enjoy their new system. Welcome!

Gerry Borysiak is chairman of our Atari Faire scheduled for a Saturday in April. Generally, the format will include the demonstration of various Atari computers (probably including STs), different kinds and manufacturers of peripheral hardware and software from games to word processing and databases. We will also have available some of the better public domain software for sale. Gerry will need a lot of help putting this faire together. He will be calling us to lend a hand and for the use of our systems at the Faire.

The BASIC programming seminar is being chaired by Steve Gilbert. He is busy putting all the loose ends together. One big headache is where to meet. The Wyoming Library is booked, so we are looking. Call Steve if you know a place.

Everyone will be notified when the details are finalized.

The suggestion was made that we keep our hardware database up-to-date. We will attempt to do this. A sheet will be at the March and April meetings, so you can indicate what hardware you no longer have and what you have purchased since the questionnaire. Blank questionnaire forms will be available at the meetings for those who did not participate the first time. Again, if you can't make the meeting, drop me a line.

George Nosky, 616-942-1527,
2440 Parkridge SE,
Grand Rapids, MI 49506

GRASS Meeting February 3, 1988

President:	George Nosky
Vice President:	Gary Heintz
Secretary:	Marvin Waid
Librarian:	Chuck Baughman

At this meeting, there were approximately 25 to 30 people in attendance. Joe Mann demonstrated a basic program that he created called "LOTTO." There were a lot of interesting features that this program would do. It would pick 6 different random numbers without picking the same number twice. You could also "cheat" and try your number and see how many tries it would take to choose your picks. I think Joe did an excellent job of not only creating this program, but also of displaying it. Great news, he gave a copy to the library!

After this demo, we discussed BASIC programming and how we want to proceed. Steve Gilbert will take charge of this. Time and dates as to when this will happen have not yet been set. Topics discussed were making programs do what we want, taking apart programs and hands-on experience. Contact Steve if you would like to participate.

Supporting the ST was tabled for now because there is already an ST group that meets in the Grand Rapids area. We may wish to contact them to be involved in the Atari Faire coming up in April. Tim Feenstra volunteered to introduce new members and to distribute a packet that would include a questionnaire, by-laws, etc. We are also thinking of sending letters to members who haven't been around for a long time to see if they are still interested in their 8bit Atari.

In April we will be raffling off tickets for some software. I believe it is the "News Station." This is a good way to support the club and possibly gain something for yourself. Chuck Baughman will demonstrate News Station in April. More demos to come later on....

Updating the By-laws will be discussed in March as George has already given me a preliminary copy of proposed changes. Next GRASS meeting is March 2nd. Hope to see you there.

Marvin Waid

M.A.C.E. Journal

1988 MACE Meeting Dates

Officer	General
March 4	March 22
April 8	April 19
May 6	May 17
June 10	June 21
July 8	July 19

All General meetings are held in room 115 of the Southfield Civic Center at 10 1/2 mile road and Evergreen. Meetings begin at 7:30. For further info, write to MACE, PO Box 2785, Southfield, Michigan 48037

From the MACE President

HEADACHE #69

For a while I wondered if we were going to be able to have a February meeting; many of the people who were to do presentations called and cancelled at the last minute. Fortunately, Jim Steinbrecher and Bob Retelle put on excellent demos (as usual) for us.

EPSON PURCHASE

The group purchase of Epson printers was cancelled because we found out we could now buy them "over the counter" for less than the original group purchase offer. Epson seems to be one of the few companies who are constantly lowering their prices while turning out top quality products. I don't know what their secret to success is, but I wish the auto manufacturers would try to discover it too.

VISITING CLUBS

We've had an increase in the number of visitors from other clubs. We welcome all of you and enjoy your company. We also welcome demos and presentations by other clubs -- in fact, some of our most interesting demos have been by other clubs.

ANTIC MAGAZINE

Some local clubs are not taking advantage of Antic's recent offer of a discounted disk/magazine subscription. They indicated they were boycotting Antic because Antic implied that MACE is a bunch of pirates for having Antic software in our BBS download sections (as did most other Atari clubs in North America). We appreciate your support, but MACE has no ill feelings toward Antic over this topic. Although we feel their letter to us was poorly worded or poorly thought out, we don't believe it was intended to be as insulting to MACE as it turned out. It was simply the result of the let-

ter's author trying to be an amateur lawyer and sticking his foot in Antic's mouth. Antic is a fine magazine; MACE wants you to feel free to enjoy it.

ANALOG MAGAZINE

Lee Pappas of Analog called me and promised to send me a letter explaining what's happening to Analog. The letter, like their magazine, never arrived. Lee also said we should be receiving the April issue of Analog in late March. I should mention that Lee had to make several calls to get in touch with me. His persistence may indicate that Analog is trying harder in 1988. However, I still recommend you don't renew your Analog subscription until you get everything you paid for in 1987.

SPECIAL MEMBERS

I had the great pleasure of giving out two "MACE Appreciation Awards" at the February meeting. These awards are for members who have quietly but continually put in a lot of work to keep our club going, often without any thanks from anyone. The awards were given to Gordon Totty, who has given us years of humorous reading, and Allen Bargen, who writes the excellent monthly column, "Flying The ST." We may forget to mention it to you Allen and Gordon, but we appreciate what you've done for us. Thanks from all of us.

MEETING THEMES

Our March meeting is Printer Graphics night. We'll show you how to make color prints on any Epson printer, how to make graphic labels, how to use different fonts on your Epson printer and how to use Printshop. Then we'll top it off with a sale on our 17 disks of PrintShop icons and 87 disks of pictures. April's meeting will cover home productivity programs such as: mailing labels, mortgage amortization, and easy databases. May, of course, is the birthday party. The theme will be fun and socializing. June's theme will be word processing and will feature demos of the more popular word processors and spelling checkers.

As always, your questions about any Atari subject will be welcomed at any meeting even if the question doesn't fit that night's theme. MACE wants to help you make your Atari more useful and enjoyable for you.

Don Neff

Meeting Minutes

The general meeting of the Michigan Atari Computer Enthusiasts was called to order on February 16, 1988 at 7:43 p.m. by President Don Neff. Don started the meeting by announcing that many of the people who were to do presentations called and cancelled at the last minute, but that we were going to have a good meeting because of Jim Steinbrecher and Bob Retelle who volunteered to do demos. Don also said the next meeting would be March 22 instead of March 15 (one week later).

Jim Steinbrecher gave a demo of his conversion of an Action! game called "Action Max" for use with the 8bit Atari. It's a new game concept using a TV, VCR, computer and an Atari light gun. Jim said the conversion would not be on the market until this spring. There are four tapes available, and each tape runs about 15 minutes and cost $20.00. Another game Jim demonstrated was called "Sonic Fury" and two boys along with Richard Racusin volunteered to play. They all agreed that Jim made it look a lot easier than it was.

Next Paul Wheeler did two game demo's for the ST. First he showed "Flight Simulator" and then Doug Dagley and Irene Church volunteered to play Wheel Of Fortune."

Don mentioned that Jerry Cross is trying to organize a trip to CES in Chicago and those interested should see Jerry. No one expressed an interest in the Antic offer so the subject was dropped. The group purchase of Epson printers was cancelled because we could now buy them "over the counter" for less than the original group purchase offer.

Don announced MACE East is up. The system is operating at 300/1200 baud, and the number is 978-1685.

Don said Lee Pappas of Analog Magazine called him and confirmed they are being bought out. Mr. Pappas promised to send Don a letter explaining what's happening to Analog. Don said again this month that MACE members are not writing articles for the MAM magazine. Persons wishing to submit articles may upload them to MACE WeST 582-0657, MACE East 978-1685, Molin's Den 420-0407, or The Treasure CheST 973-9137. If you don't have access to a modem, you may submit articles to any officer, who will see that they get to Journal Editor Pattie Snyder-Rayl.

Two certificates of appreciation were awarded to special members. The first one went to Gordon Totty for his support of MACE and the many excellent articles he has written. The second award was presented to Allen Bargen for his column "Flying The ST."

Bob Retelle demoed "Dungeon Master", an ST game of good and evil. After his demo he hosted a question and answer period. Don passed out fliers about a computer swap shop and told all members that if they have never gone to one they should. He mentioned that he has picked up Atari books at these shows for two and three dollars each.

The meeting ended at 9:32.

(Special Thanx! to Sharie Middlebrook and Heather Neff who recorded the meeting minutes inmy absence!)

Mike Olin

Notice! In the February issue of MAM, I (LeRoy Valley) mentioned a program called MEDCOPY in ST Notes. This program is a copy of Procopy 1.31 with a facelift. It is *not* a public domain program! If you see it on a BBS, please delete it!!

The Tri-City Atari Users Group meets the second Saturday of every month at 2:00 pm at the Rudy Zauel Memorial Library on the corner of Shattuck and Center in Saginaw. Upcoming meetings are scheduled as follows: March 12, April 16, 1988. Officers of TAG are as follows:

LeRoy Valley	President	686-6796
Marty Schmidt	Treasurer/Sec.	792-6029
Al Jennings	8bit Disk lib.	790-1980
Steve Volker	ST Disk Lib.	793-2955
George Stuart	NewsLetter Ed.	892-7545

Club dues are $20.00 per year. For this fee you get the Michigan Atari Magazine, support for both the 8bit and the ST, and full access to the club's public domain library. We currently have about 140 disks in the 8-bit library and 40 in the ST library. You can get copies of these disks *at no charge* if you bring your own disk to copy on (time permitting) at the regular meeting. If you don't have a disk with you, you can get the 8bit disks for $1.00 each and the ST disks for $2.00 each. Non-TAG members can get copies of the 8bit disks for $2.00 each and the ST disks for $4.00 each. If you need to renew, do it now! If you haven't joined yet, then do it now!

Hot Flashes from the Future!

March has more to offer than just the promise of spring...it's a meeting packed full of adventure for us eight-bitters! Al Jennings will demo Auto Duel by Origin. This three disk game can be purchased for less than $35.00. Auto Duel is not just another wrist-wrenching joystick buster, but a game that takes a bit of preplanning and practice. Auto Duel has the potential to become an 8bit classic.

Just don't seem to have enough time? Did that last job take longer than expected? Well, maybe Bob Schindehette has just what the Boss ordered -- Project Planner from Antic magazine.

Project Planner is in the November issue and free for the typing. Also, if all goes according to plan, as you walk through the door you should see the Atari XEP80 and a monochrome monitor!

On the ST side, LeRoy Valley will be demoing Digisound ST by Alpha Systems. This sound digitizer allows you to sample real world sounds, voices, or music at 5K to 40K per second! Sounds created on the digitizer can be played back through the monitor or used in your own programs! Be on hand to see this interesting piece of hardware!

Relics to Relish

The meeting date was voted on and unanimously approved to be moved to the last Saturday that falls on or before the 17th of the month. This will allow the magazine maximum time to reach us. The first changed meeting will be in April. (Just read your meeting notes!) Hmm...what did I do with my issue of Antic? I think a repeat has the old Atari 800 for $79.00, na, maybe I can still get an Omnimon chip and keep my 130XE. But then again, I can just use the translator to boot Data Perfect that Char Davis showed and save my money for a 2400 baud Supra modem ($179.95 list) that Al Jennings brought to the meeting.

Char showed us that the Atari 8bit is not *just a game machine,* but a computer with enough power to get the job done. Al Jennings showed us his new Supra Modem. He really couldn't show much, it's just a little box and you can't see how it works with out a phone line, so he held it in the air and everybody went 'Wow neat!'

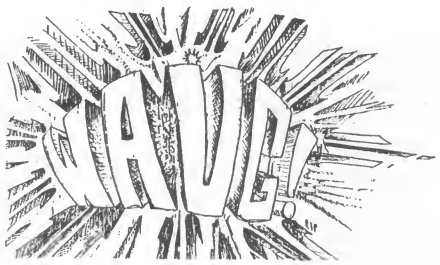
The best news came when LeRoy asked for a volunteer as NewsLetter Editor and lo and behold Don Sutherland and said "I'll do it!" Now you see that presented a problem because Don wasn't a member, so everybody turned to Don and said "do you have a modem?" No, but Marty said "That's no problem, just pay me 20 bucks (Marty, the treasurer) and I'll link my 8bit and ST together. If you would be so kind as to bring the newsletter over to my house." And that's the story of how Don became the Newsletter Editor. The end.

On the ST side, Marty Schmidt demoed Regent Base 1.1, a very powerful and, (judging from the demo) very complicated database. This database allows a user to totally customize his or her own database. You can (read *must*) design the actual screens to display the data through an extensive command language. You also design all of your own printouts, and have complete control over how your data is handled. The price that is paid for all of this flexibility is that the user had better enjoy dabbling in programming at least a little. All in all, Regent Base, while requiring lots of user work (and frustration) ends us displaying databases with a *very* polished look. This package would be great for developing custom applications for businesses.

LeRoy Valley then provided the ST members with another disk of the month called "February Freebies." This is starting to become a regular thing! On the disk were goodies such as Shadow (mentioned in last month's ST Notes), DCFormat in an accessory version (yeah!), and a demo of Gauntlet.

Expiration Notice: Check the label on your MAM. If it says "Last Issue" next to the date, then you need to renew. Remember, once your membership expires you'll receive *no* more issues of the Michigan Atari Magazine!

8bit Equipment Volunteers: Ted Beauchamp, Nelson Greene. ST Equipment Volunteers: Dennis Wright, Leroy Valley. Once again, a big thanks to all of you who loan your equipment to the club.



From The Prez...

At the February meeting, member Brian Hall suggested WAUG! consider holding meetings during the summer months because we do not traditionally meet in July and August. Originally, the membership was made up of students who, it was felt, would be out of town. And so it was...

But that was then and this is now. It appears, from the informal poll conducted at the meeting, that WAUG! now consists of a number of members who really would like to meet during the off months. Personally, I support the idea, mostly because it seems apparent this is what the members want, but also because I find the two-month "vacation" to be too long. There are, however, many things to be considered:

1) The dues, as they are currently structured, will not sufficiently cover the cost of maintaining membership in the club. Members will have to consider an increase in rates with additional room rental costs and copies of MAM. For the record, 10 issues of MAM cost the club $8.00/yr/member. As it stands now, the club has only $2.00/yr/ member (plus revenue from disk sales) to apply to other expenses throughout a year. One can see the officers were soon going to be pressed to request an increase in dues *anyway.*

2) There needs to be more member involvement in normal club operations. Additional work involved in planning two more meetings will not crush the current executive board, but help from the members would ease the load all the way around. (I am thinking, for example, that Pattie would probably appreciate a volunteer to get the monitor while she is busy arranging seating, or vice versa. And the librarians would probably appreciate help for an hour or two between meetings to copy disks and develop bundles. The list is endless!) Here's a suggestion: ask any officer "What can I do to help?" If the answer is "Nothing," attribute it to shyness and ask again!

3) The members will need to offer more suggestions on proposed topics of discussion at monthly meetings. The night always seems to go by so quickly, we *have* had many good demonstrations in the past, but the prearranged topic is not cast in stone. If there is something else you would like to discuss outside the current topic, make sure an officer knows.

As promised, the officers will discuss the possibility of additional meetings at their next meeting, and we will pursue the topic again in the March general meeting. As always, the officer meetings are held on the last Tuesday of each month, at approximately 7:30p.m. Members are welcome/ encouraged to attend! Contact an officer to find out where the next officer meeting is held.

The March meeting topic is Business Applications. And don't forget the meetings will now promptly start at 7:00 instead of 7:30p.m.

Michael Olin

General Meeting: February. 9, 1988

It was Games Night at WAUG!, and we were treated to quite a batch of games for the 8bit available in our disk library. Mike Pieronek, the 8bit librarian, clutched the joystick desperately while pretending to have a good time as game after game left him dead, maimed or at least popcornless. In all fairness, there were a couple games where he appeared to have some possibility of surviving; but, at least one of those (Mazewar) was when the game was in demo mode, so the computer was actually surviving. As for the others, maybe he just didn't admit to putting them in demo mode...

Then, for the ST Bob Retelle treated us to "Dungeon Master," which is a recently released commercial game from FTL with incredibly detailed graphics and nice digitized sound, such as the rather unseemly noises from one's stomach after munching down a piece of monster. Apparently this game is so hot that it's generating *lots* of messages on the major telecom services like CompuServe and GEnie.

On more business-related topics, there was discussion of the following:

1) Whether the club should distribute newsletters (MAM) at the meetings and then just mail out those that aren't picked up. This would save on postage, but it would mean receiving it a little later (except for those who haven't been receiving it by the day of the meeting).

2) At the next meeting the "Basic Turbocharger" package will be raffled off. This is a collection of 167 machine language routines in string form, with documentation, that can easily be incorporated into your Basic code to speed up many functions (such as reading or writing picture files).

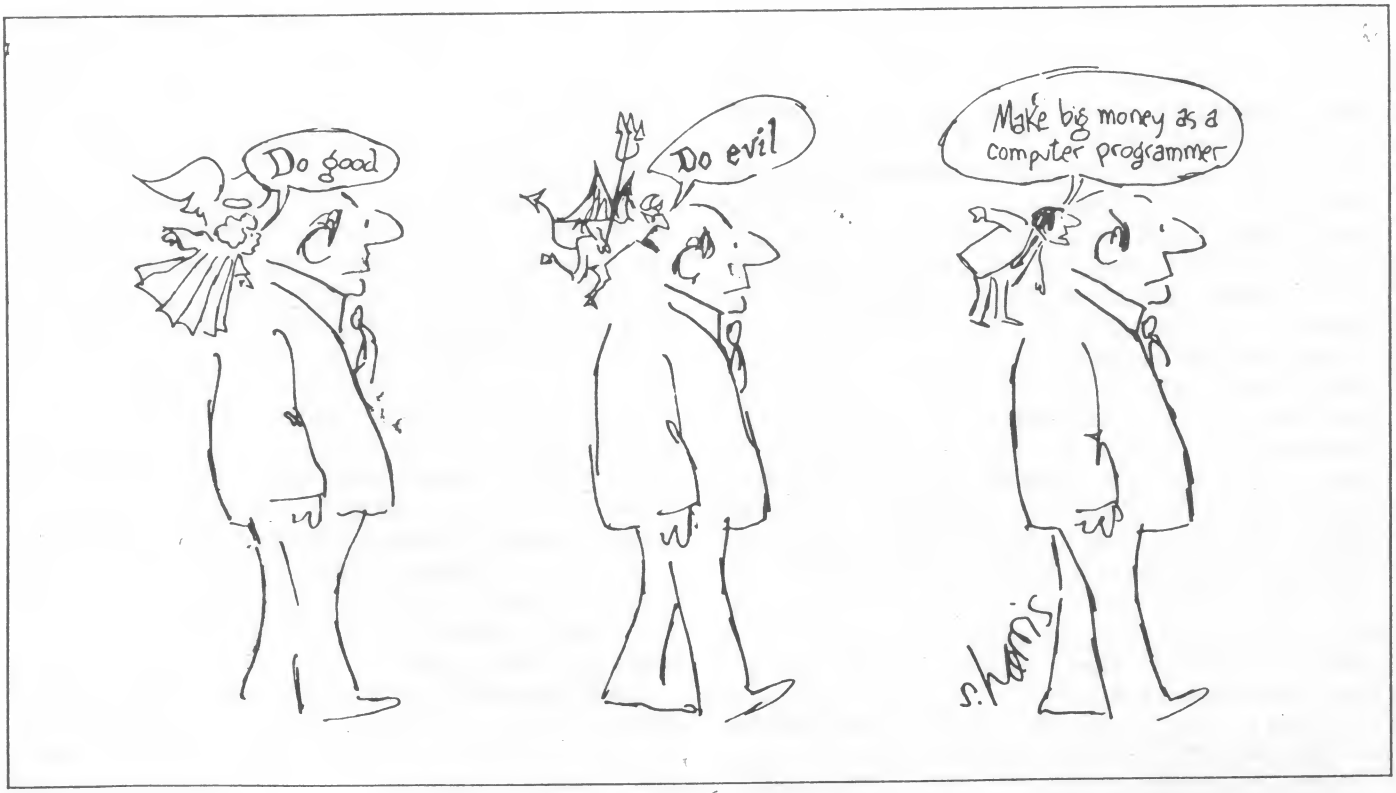
3) Since the big monitor we use at meetings always has to go at 9:00, we decided to attempt starting the meetings at 7:00 instead of 7:30 to allow more demo time.

4) The possibility of at least one meeting in the summer was brought up and will be discussed further by the officers. (WAUG! has traditionally not met in July or August.)

The End.

Our team has been selected to find an inexpensive substitute for accuracy."

"Frankly, Mrs. Pilkins, it'll be a lot easier for you to pay the $27,300 telephone bill than it will for us to find the mistake."



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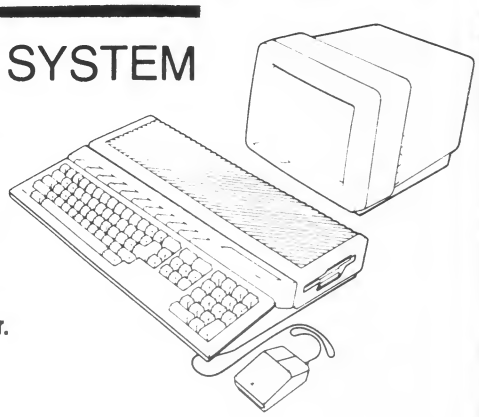

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